# The Holy Scriptures With Commentary

## Micah

Max L. Margolis

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# THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
WITH COMMENTARY

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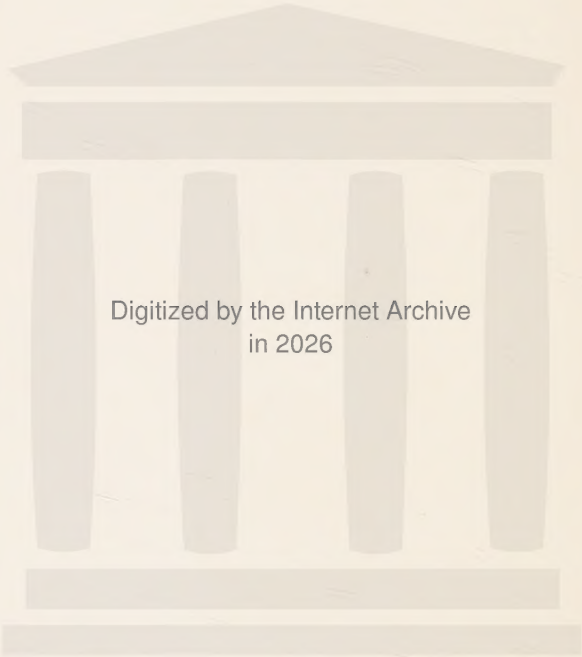
# MICAH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# THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

WITH COMMENTARY

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# MICAH

BY

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# INTRODUCTION

1. The Book of Micah occupies the sixth place in the group of the "Twelve Prophets", which, at an early date (Sirach xlix. 10), formed a volume by itself, counting as one book among the twenty-four of Holy Writ. According to the heading (i. 1), the author of the prophecies was Micah of Moresheth (a small town in the Shephelah, the Lowland, or slope, between the high hills of Judæa and the maritime coast of Philistia), a contemporary of the kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. There is nothing in the utterances of the prophet which points to the stirring events connected with Sennacherib's Palestinian campaign in 701; it may therefore be assumed that his ministry closed at a previous date, thus extending in all over a period of some thirty years (from 735 to 705). The prophetic activity of Isaiah began a little earlier and closed somewhat later.

There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the date given in the heading (i. 1), especially as it is in part corroborated by Jer. xxvi. 18 f., where Micah iii. 12 is quoted in full. The destruction of Samaria, which is spoken of as a future event in i. 5 ff., is placed by many scholars, at variance with II Kings xviii. 10, in the reign of Ahaz, and the reign of Jotham must have been considerably shorter than we are led to believe from II Kings xv. 33. See Kittel, *History of the Hebrews*, § 53 *a*.

2. The period in which the two prophets lived and worked was that of Assyrian supremacy in the affairs of Western Asia. It was the age of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727), Shalmaneser IV (727-722), Sargon II (722-705), Sennacherib (705-681)—those mighty monarchs under whom the westward advance of Assyria, begun with a steady purpose a century earlier, culminated in the conquest of Syria, the fall of Damascus (in 732) and Samaria (in 722), and the reduction of Judah and other Palestinian principalities to a state of vassalage. The Assyrian colossus, absolute master of the Armenian highlands as well as the countries west of the Euphrates, had humbled recalcitrant Babylon and was at the gate of the Pharaonic empire, both of which had repeatedly instigated the Palestinian princes to foolhardy sedition against their Assyrian masters.

Palestine, from its geographical position and configuration, was at all times in antiquity an object of prey to the two mighty empires in the Nile and in the Tigris-Euphrates valley, and split up into a variety of cantonal principalities resisting fusion and rendering foreign aggression an easy matter. The history of Israel and Judah is therefore, politically speaking, but an episode in the contest of the two great civilizations for supremacy. The Old Babylonian dominion in the fourth millennium before the Christian era was succeeded by the Egyptian conquest under Tahutimes III; the Egyptian supremacy lasted not quite two centuries. From the fourteenth to the tenth century Egypt was too weak to interfere in the affairs of Syria and Palestine; in that interval of time our ancestors settled in Palestine, and were on their way to founding a powerful commonwealth. The successful career of David was unhampered on the one side by Egypt and on the other by Assyria, just then in a period of decline after its rise to power toward the end of the fourteenth

century and its westward movements in the twelfth and eleventh. Solomon's advances were checked by Shishak I who was ambitious to reconquer Palestine, which had been lost to Egypt for two centuries or more. The Pharaoh plotted with Jeroboam against Solomon; in the fifth year of Rehoboam he invaded Palestine, causing great suffering to Israel and Judah. In the eighth century Egyptian influence again began to manifest itself in Palestine. Egypt had her emissaries at the petty Palestinian courts, sowing discord and craftily inciting the princes to resistance against the Assyrian advance. Though always unreliable ("a bruised reed," II Kings xviii. 21), and rarely making good her promises of help, she was the cause of all the trouble in Palestine, beginning with 721, for a whole century. The flames of rebellion were fanned from the opposite quarter by an ambitious Chaldæan prince, Merodach-baladan II, who twice, on the accession of Sargon as well as on that of Sennacherib, sought to involve Syria and Palestine in an uprising against Assyria. See Paton, *Early History of Syria and Palestine*, 1901, chapters I–XII.

3. Between Egypt and Assyria, Israel acted, to use the language of Hosea (vii. 11), "like a silly dove, without understanding." In its coquetry with the great powers, it was fast losing its individuality. "Ephraim, he mixeth himself among the peoples," the same prophet complains (vii. 8). The whole aim of the Mosaic Law had been to safeguard Israel's vocation as a holy nation. On the soil of Palestine, Israel was to create an unique order of things grounded in equity and justice and rooted in the love of God. But Israel soon forgot the teachings of its greatest prophet. Once the Israelites had crossed the Jordan, they succumbed to the allurements of a superior civilization. The native population proved too powerful for wholesale extermination, and so they made peace with the

Canaanites and intermarried with them, "they mingled themselves with the nations and learned their deeds" (Ps. cvi. 36). The Lord was worshipped after the same manner and with the same impure rites as the Baals of the native population. Under Ahab, of the house of Omri, the cult of the Phœnician Baal was introduced. The worship of the "host of heaven" was particularly in vogue in the time with which we are concerned. Child sacrifices were customary; of Ahaz it is reported (II Kings xvi. 3) that he offered his own son by fire. The Temple at Jerusalem did not escape defilement. All over the land, "upon every high hill, and under every leafy tree," high places were erected. Moreover, law and justice were trampled under foot by a rapacious aristocracy. Through usury and all manner of exaction, the poor were fleeced, robbed of all their possessions. Samaria and Jerusalem vied with Nineveh and Babylon and Memphis. "For Israel forgot his Maker, and builded palaces; and Judah multiplied fortified cities" (Hosea viii. 14).

4. Unlike Isaiah, who took an active interest in the political questions of the day, frequently confronting kings and high dignitaries in person, Micah preferred the part of a distant, but nevertheless keen observer. He looks upon the military ambitions of Judah as the root of all evil, its "chiefest sin" (i. 13); together with the superstitions and the idolatrous practices of the two capitals, they con-

stitute the reprehensible present order of things, which must pass away (v. 9 ff.). The main subject of his denunciations, however, is the maladministration of justice and the exploitation of the poor on the part of the ruling classes. With the fearlessness of an Amos, whose home was in the neighboring wilderness of Tekoa, he declaims against the general corruption. The princes and the judges are in league with the unscrupulous rich (vii. 3), whose houses are full of the proceeds of violence (vi. 12). The traders are deceitful with their wicked balances and their scant measure (vi. 10 f.). The most intimate relations of friendship and domestic life are disrupted (vii. 5 f.). Jerusalem appears to the prophet as a city built with the blood of her poor (iii. 10; comp. ii. 1 f.; 8 f.; iii. 1-3).

5. The ruin of Samaria seemed to the prophet to involve the fate of the southern kingdom (i. 9; comp. verse 6). He boldly announced the destruction of Jerusalem which he believed to be imminent (iii. 12). He conceived it as a divine punishment in return for the sins of her leading classes. His stern rebukes and his prophecy of evil naturally made him unpopular. He was antagonized by a class of easy-going, optimistic prophets, who kept assuring the people that no evil would befall the city. Against them, no less than against the rapacious rich, the corrupt judges, and the venal priests, the prophet directs his biting invective (iii. 5 f.; 11). The popular prophet is the man bent on falsehood and

flattery, who pampers the people's sensuous appetites (ii. 11) and cries, Peace, as long as he is paid for his services (iii. 5). Over against the false prophets who misguide the people, Micah knows himself as the true prophet, inspired by the Lord with a sense of justice and with courage to give utterance to his convictions, "to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (iii. 8).

6. While the destruction of Jerusalem is to Micah an assured fact, it by no means constitutes the final event in the prophet's vision. He knows of an ancient prophecy concerning the glorious Messianic future, when Zion shall become the site of Paradise Regained, the spiritual centre of the world (iv. 1–4). That day will surely come. Till then, however, Jerusalem and her people must suffer much humiliation. The city will be captured, and the population will be exiled (iv. 9 f.; 14). They will come even unto Babylon; but there the Lord will redeem them (iv. 10 *b*). There will be a latter and more glorious exodus; the dipersed of Israel will be gathered and the old landmarks restored, while Israel's enemies will be put to shame (vii. 10 f.; 14 ff.; iv. 6). Once more the nations of the earth will be gathered about Jerusalem for a final assault; but they will be utterly routed (iv. 11–13). Then the Messianic ruler will arise and establish peace in the land. Assyria will no more invade the Holy Land; and the rem-

nant of Jacob will dwell in security (v. 1 ff.; iv. 7*a*; vii. 18). It will be a community freed from sin (vii. 18 f.) and from all the impurities attaching to the present order of things (v. 9 ff.). The everlasting Kingdom of God on mount Zion will then be established (iv. 7 *b*).

7. In line with the other prophets, Micah censures the people's foolish notions concerning the manner in which the Lord is to be served. The Lord, the prophet declares, desires neither burnt-offerings, nor thousands of rams, nor tens of thousands of rivers of oil, nor the sacrifice of one's dearest child (vi. 6 f.). The duties of the true worshipper are summed up with classic brevity. The prophet's code is simple enough. "Execute justice and love kindness, and walk humbly with thy God!" (vi. 8).

8. Micah's language is throughout lofty. He is fond of playing on words, however (comp. i. 10 ff.; iv. 14); at times he is sarcastic (ii. 11; iii. 5). Though fearless in denunciation, the prophet is capable of tenderer moods. His last word to his people is one of consolation and intercession (vii. 14 ff.). His theology conceives of the Lord as a stern Judge who will not suffer the sinner to go unpunished (i. 3–5), yet as kind and forgiving to the penitent (vii. 18). For sin must be expiated, but there is hope for the sinner who confesses his guilt and submits without a murmur to the divine chastisement (vii. 9). There is evil

in the world, but it will be overcome in the end; when corruption is greatest, salvation is surest (vii. 6 f.). Israel must pass through the darkness of exile and dispersion, but there is a glorious future for the "remnant" (vii. 8 f.; 18). For the Lord does not retain His anger forever; He will fulfil the promises made to the fathers in the days of old (vii. 18–20). The indestructibility of Israel means the ultimate triumph of God in and over the world; the two are inseparably interwoven in the prophetic faith and hope.

The unity of authorship which, in keeping with tradition, is here assumed for the entire book has been challenged by the exponents of the higher or "literary" criticism. As applied to the prophetic writings, literary criticism is a quarter of a century old, its principles having been set forth in 1881, in what has been described by one of the school as a "pioneering" article by the late Professor Stade in the first volume of the *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, of which he was the editor. The underlying conception is that the prophetic books, instead of representing complete collections of the utterances of the prophets made by the authors themselves or by their immediate disciples, rather constitute the result of the literary activity of generations of students at whose hands the pre-exilic prophecies received substantial additions (insertions, interpolations) mirroring the beliefs and ideas, but particularly the hopes and wishes, of the post-exilic Jewish community. Advanced critics do not hesitate to assign large portions of the prophetical literature to as late a period as the Maccabæan. Especially the eschatological sections, those dealing with the Messianic future of the nation, are in bulk pronounced to be the fabrications of post-exilic scribes, parasitic after-growths, which must be removed in order that the genuine pre-exilic prophecies may be laid open to view. The arguments upon which literary criticism bases its results are mainly drawn from incoherencies in the sequence of thought, differences of vocabulary and style, and difficulties of an antiquarian character. It is found that the transition from the denun-

ciatory to the consolatory prophecies (in our book from ii. 11 to ii. 12, from iii. 12 to iv. 1, from vii. 6 to vii. 7) is often abrupt, unprepared, and psychologically inconceivable in one and the same writer. No room seems to be allowed for the free play of the imagination, which is certainly capable of bridging over the gulf yawning between periods widely apart; nor is it remembered that abruptness and a certain amount of obscurity are characteristic of prophetic style. Literary criticism, moreover, operates with a preconceived notion that we possess in the prophetic books full verbal reports of the prophetic utterances, while the opposite is rather true, that from the outset we have but echoes of the actual speeches, fragments loosely strung together, and coming from different periods in the activity of the same prophet. Then, again, it is a fatal error of literary criticism to assume that, because a certain idea meets us for the first time in a late literary production, it is necessarily late itself. Thus it is the merit of a newer school of criticism (headed by Gunkel) to have made it plausible that the sum of ideas denoted as eschatological and most completely developed in the late prophetic and apocalyptic writings, is in point of fact of ancient date and presupposed in the earliest prophetic utterances extant. See Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie*, 1905.

As for differences of vocabulary, it is well to remember that the transformation which a language undergoes is usually in the nature of a slow process. Centuries are required for a word or a syntactical innovation, always the coinage of individual writers, to become the common property of literary men. It is preposterous to pronounce vi. 9–16 to be late merely because some of the words (תושיה, "wisdom", verse 9, זכה "to be pure", and רמיה, "deceitful", verse 11) are frequent in late writings. The judgment of style is a matter of subjective taste; unless supported by weightier arguments, the evidence therefrom is inconclusive. Antiquarian difficulties are naturally of greater moment, but in view of our imperfect knowledge of historical circumstances a cautious attitude is imperative.

The subjoined table shows the extent of the additions or interpolations which advanced criticism assumes in the book of Micah.

| | Ewald (1867) | Wellhausen (1892) | Stade (1881-1903) | Marti (1904) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 722 Samaria destroyed<br>Hezekiah<br>Isaiah<br>701 Sennacherib's invasion | i–v (with the exception of ii. 12 f.?) | i. 2 ff.; ii. 1–11; iv. 14 (?); v. 9-13 (?) | i. 5 *b* ff.; ii. 1-11; iii | i. 5 *b*, 6, 8, 9, 16; ii. 1–3, 4 (?), 6–11; iii. 1–2 *a*, 3 *a*, 4, 5 *a*, 2 *b*, 5 *b*–12 |
| 692 Manasseh<br>637 Josiah<br>Jeremiah<br>604 Nebuchadrezzar | vi. f. (by an anonymous prophet under Manasseh) | vi. 1-8 (by Micah ?) | | |
| 597 Jehoiachin<br>Ezekiel<br>586 Fall of Jerusalem<br>538 Cyrus<br>Haggai, Zechariah<br>515 Second Temple completed | | iv. 6-10 (iv. 1-4 older) | ii. 12 f. | iv. 5 ff.<br>iv. 1–4; v. 1, 3<br>vi. 6–8 |
| 445 Nehemiah<br>332 Alexander the Great | | ii. 12 f.<br>iv. 11-13<br>v. 1-8<br>vi. 9-16<br>vii | i. 2-4<br>iv. 1-4; 11-14;<br>v. 1-3, 6-14<br>iv. 5-10;<br>v. 4 f. | |
| 167 Maccabæan Uprising<br>103 Aristobulus I. | | | vii. 7-20 | v. 4 ff.; vii. 7–20 (two psalms) vi. 9–16; vii. 1–6<br>Redactorial: i. 2–*a*; vi. 1–6<br>Glosses: i. 10–15; ii. 5; iii. 3 *b* and minor parts. |

It is impossible here to discuss the merits of such criticism, unsubstantiated as its reasonings are in most cases. The more serious difficulties, however, must claim our attention. ii. 12 f., provided we take it in the meaning that first suggests itself, i. e. as consolatory (Targum and Midrash [e. g. Gen. rabba, ch. xlviii]), is certainly difficult in the present context. The change from the denunciations and threats of the entire earlier portion of the book to the promise conveyed here is absolutely unprepared. We miss at the very least some such introductory phrase as, *In the future* (actually supplied by the Targum). Ibn Ezra long ago solved the difficulty in his way and rather ingeniously. If we follow that scholar, we should print the two verses in quotation marks; that is, Micah is giving here a sample of the optimistic sermons of the false prophets referred to in the preceding verse. A number of objections have been raised against Ibn Ezra's view. In the first place, a quotation from the mouth of the false prophets is found in verse 11; then, the two are dissimilar in tone, the former being of a sensuous character, while the latter deals with the glorious future of Israel; lastly, the concluding words of verse 11, containing Micah's retort, would interrupt the two quotations. None of the objections, however, is incontestable. The two quotations might well be interrupted by Micah's retort, which could not very conveniently be kept in abeyance until the end of the chapter. The sensual tone of the first quotation might be an intentional exaggeration, and need not be taken literally; in the second the prophet would more seriously, and therefore more accurately, reproduce his opponents. A serious objection, however, still remains. It is not likely that the false prophets concerned themselves with the events following the downfall of the nation, which contingency they were most emphatic in denying. The Kimhis, quite plausibly, expound the passage in the sense of a threat. Israel is to be gathered, a large bustling mass of people, as sheep in a sheepfold, as a flock in a pasture, the whole people, none excluded. Suddenly a wether breaks through the gate—the entire flock follows it; so shall Israel's King (see the commentary), the Lord, depart from the land defiled by the sins of His people, and the whole people, "like sheep that have no shepherd," shall go after Him out of the country, not, indeed, with Him, but without Him, into exile. It may be safe, however, to

accept the obvious meaning and then either acquiesce in the abrupt change of subject, or else suppose that we have here a misplaced fragment, the original connection of which has been lost.

iv. 1–4 is found repeated in Isa. ii. 2–4 (with the omission of the last verse and with slight textual modifications). It is clearly impossible to suppose that Micah borrowed the prophecy from Isaiah (Abrabanel), or that Isaiah borrowed it from Micah. Nor can we subscribe to the opinion that Micah's prophecy was inserted in the book of Isaiah by a copyist or compiler. Certain critics explain the duplication of the passage as the result of uncertainty on the part of the compilers of the sacred texts who knew the prophecy to belong to the period of Hezekiah, but were doubtful as to whether Isaiah or Micah was the author. The most plausible view, however, is that of Koppe (1779). Both Micah and Isaiah made use of an ancient prophecy with which they were acquainted.

In chapters iv and v the coherence of the parts, it must be owned, leaves much to be desired. Nevertheless, it is possible to establish a reasonable sequence of thought. The prophet begins by picturing, in the language of an ancient prophecy, the glory of the future Jerusalem as the spiritual centre of the world (iv. 1–4), and deduces therefrom the lesson that Israel must hold fast to its religion (verse 5). For the exile is not final; the dispersed shall be gathered (verses 6 and 7), and the former kingdom shall be restored to Jerusalem (verse 8). Hence, do not lose courage, O daughter of Zion! for though thou must go into exile, there, in the exile, the Lord's deliverance will come to thee (verse 9 f.). Many nations will then gather again about Jerusalem, the hosts of Gog, in the language of Ezekiel (ch. xxxviii); but there they shall be completely routed (verses 11–13). (Ezekiel [verse 17] clearly indicates that the coming of the hosts of Gog was the subject of former prophecies.) In verse 14 the prophet resumes the subject of verse 9 as an introduction to the fuller Messianic prophecy, v. 1 ff. Now thy ruler must suffer humiliation (verse 14); but after a time the greater ruler will rise and establish everlasting peace for the remnant of Jacob (v. 1 ff.) Then the present civilization with its reprehensible features will disappear (verses 9–13). (In the closing verse [14], the prophet indicates that the objectionable practices were acquired from the nations; hence the

latter must be destroyed in order that Israel may escape contagion.) Accordingly, there is no reason to break up, with Stade, the two middle chapters into two parallel prophecies (iv. 1–4; 11–14; v. 1–3; 6–14; v. 4 f., with iv. 5 as a bracket).

The antiquarian difficulties which induce Stade to assign a post-exilic date to the two prophecies are by no means insurmountable. The most serious difficulty is the mention of Babylon as the place of captivity (iv. 10). It is an old difficulty, and it was met on the part of many scholars by pronouncing a portion of the verse to be a copyist's expansion. The assumption, however, is an unnecessary one. Just as Assyria is called poetically "the land of Nimrod" (v. 5) on the basis of Gen. x. 11, the very same passage makes it plausible that Babylon is here but another name for Assyria. The city of Babylon, from the time of Hammurabi on, was the recognized metropolis of Western Asia. Even during the period of Assyrian supremacy, which coincides with the time of Micah, Babylon, though subjugated by Assyria, was culturally the capital of Western Asia (see Paton, loc. cit., p. 47 f.; Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients*, p. 160). The prophet could, therefore, with good reason use Asshur and Babel interchangeably. The other difficulties pointed out by Stade rest upon preconceived notions, which cannot be discussed here.

The allusion to child sacrifices in vi. 7 *b* prompted Ewald to assign chapters vi and vii to an anonymous prophet of the reign of Manasseh. It is true, such an act is reported of the impious king (II Kings xxi. 6). We have, however, a similar report of Ahaz (ibid., xvi. 3). Moreover, what an Ahaz or a Manasseh could do in person, the people at large were certainly capable of doing even under Hezekiah, though the king himself was a foe of idolatry. From Jeremiah and Ezekiel we gather that in their days child sacrifices were by no means an aberration confined to royalty. Thus there is nothing in the reference to child sacrifices beyond a general statement which may fit any time.

The transition from the despondent soliloquy of the ideal community on the eve of its discomfiture (vii. 1–6) to the buoyant hope that the darkness of the exile will give way to brighter days and be followed by a latter exodus as marvellous as the former (vii. 7 ff.), is by no means as abrupt as is commonly asserted. The antithetical con-

struction with which the closing section sets in (verse 7) clearly expresses the thought that when the evil, the moral evil as well as its consequences, is greatest, divine help is nearest. It has furthermore been pointed out that, although in point of *fact* "a century yawns between vii. 6 and vii. 7," it is far from impossible for the prophet's imagination to bring the two periods together *ideally*. Moreover, the fall of the kingdom was to the prophet's mind by no means a distant event; he expected it shortly and in his own days. Micah, no less than Isaiah, looks for the advent of the Messianic time in a relatively remote period, but not at all in so distant an age as to be beyond the horizon of a moderate imagination. Both the death of the nation and its resurrection were conceived by the prophets of the period of Hezekiah as events, so to speak, admitting of calculation. The "times" of the Almighty, their successors learned to realize, are much slower in coming than the older prophets anticipated. The divine counsel into which but a peep is granted even to the prophetic eye, is much more difficult to comprehend. Behind the messenger, Providence mysteriously and in His own righteous ways governs the world.

9. The text of the book of Micah, though presenting a number of difficulties which point to early corruption, is on the whole in good condition. It may be said that our (Masoretic) text is substantially identical with the one underlying the Vulgate (end of fourth Christian century), the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion (second century), the Syriac Version (second century), and the Targum (the Aramaic Version, which contains ancient material antedating the Christian era). The text underlying the Greek Version (Septuagint) in all likelihood varied to some extent from our own. A few good readings are preserved there.

10. The versions are also useful for the purpose of establishing the early interpretation. The simple sense is reproduced in all except the Targum, which is paraphrastic, and often deviates therefrom in favor of homiletic interpretation, the *derash*. The latter is embodied in the Haggadic portions of the Talmud and in the Midrashim. The material is conveniently gathered in the Yalkutim on Micah; the *Yalkut Makiri* was available to the writer from a transcript of MS. Harley 5704 in the British Museum secured by President Schechter. While the French commentators—Rashi, died 1105; Menahem bar Helbo (fragments collected by S. Poznański, 1904); to a less extent Joseph Kara (edited by S. Eppenstein, 1903)—were given to the homiletic interpretation, the simple sense was sedulously cultivated by the Spanish school. We have for the book of Micah a quotation in Ibn Ezra from Samuel ha-Nagid (ca. 1050), the grammatical and lexicographical works of Abulwalid Merwan Ibn Ǧanah (Rabbi Jonah, ca. 1050), "the greatest of mediæval Hebraists," the commentary of Abraham ben Meir Ibn Ezra (1155–57), the lexicon and commentary of David ben Joseph Kimhi (died 1235), and the commentary of Don Isaac Abrabanel (died 1508). Of recent (Christian) commentators the following may be mentioned: Ewald (1867), Hitzig-Steiner (1881), Cheyne (in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, 1882), Ryssel (1887), Reuss (1892), Wellhausen (1892), Nowack

(1897), Marti (1904). The critical questions are discussed in the introductions: Kuenen (1892), Cornill (1892), König (1893), Wildeboer (1893), Driver (1898), Baudissin (1901).

# MICAH

## Chapter I. 1. *The heading.*

THE word of the Lord that came to Micah the 1
Morashtite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and
Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning
Samaria and Jerusalem.

## Chap. I. 2—III. 12. *The judgment over sinful Samaria and Jerusalem.*

### Chap. I. 2—4. *The Lord's manifestation as Judge.*

Hear, ye peoples, all of you; 2
Hearken, O earth, and all that therein is:

Chapter I. 1. The heading.

See Introduction, § 1.

*Micah*] A namesake, Micaiah the son of Imlah, prophesied under Ahab, and was distinguished for his fearlessness (I Kings xxii. 8–28. The close of verse 28, which is wanting in the Greek Version, may be due to a false identification of the two prophets. Comp. Ibn Ezra and Kimhi).

*saw*] Hebrew *hazah* (an uncommon word in place of the ordinary *ra'ah*). The prophet sees in his ecstasy sights ordinarily hidden, or he sees in ordinary things meanings not ordinarily perceived. The prophet is therefore frequently called *hozeh, a seer* (I Sam. ix. 9; Amos vii. 12), and prophecy *hazon, a vision* (Ezek. vii. 24).

Chapter I. 2—III. 12. The judgment over sinful Samaria and Jerusalem.

Chapter I. 2 ff.

2—4. The Lord's manifestation as Judge.

2. *ye peoples*] Not the tribes of Israel (Kimhi, who compares Deut. xxxiii. 19), but the nations

And let the Lord God be witness against you,
The Lord from His holy temple.
3 For, behold, the Lord cometh forth out of His place,
And will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth.
4 And the mountains shall be molten under Him,
And the valleys shall be cleft,

of the world. They are summoned not as judges between the Lord and Israel (comp. Jer. vi. 18 f.), but as interested persons. The judgment against Israel is conceived in the nature of a world-judgment.

*witness*] i. e. accuser.

*against you*] Of course, the nations are addressed, not Israel and Judah.

*from His holy temple*] i. e. heaven (Ibn Ezra, Kimhi). The Hebrew word *hekal* is an Assyrian loan-word (*ekallu*, from Sumerian *e-gal, great house*), and properly designates a *palace*.

3. *out of His place*] i. e., as the next verb shows, heaven (Ibn Ezra; comp. Isa. xxvi. 21; Hosea v. 15). The Targum paraphrases: (is about to reveal Himself) *from the place of abode of His Presence* (Shekinah). Rashi (comp. Palestinian Talmud, Ta'anit 65 *b*): from the seat of mercy to the seat of judgment. The Midrash (Gen. rabba, ch. xxxiii) says: "Woe to the wicked, for they turn the merciful nature of God into severity."

*and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth*] Targum: *and will reveal Himself, and trample under foot the strong of the earth* (the haughty and proud, Rashi). The language, of course, is figurative; it is meant to convey the majestic greatness of the Lord as He appears to judge the world. The high places of a country are its mountains and natural strongholds; to tread upon them means to exercise dominion over the country. The earth with its mountains is to the Lord coming from heaven what a country with its fastnesses is to a foreign conqueror. The Lord, manifesting Himself as Judge, is determined to reduce the earth to the primeval chaos whence it came.

4. *shall be molten... shall be cleft*] The natural phenomena

As wax before the fire,
As waters that are poured down a steep place.

5. *The cause of the divine manifestation.*

For the transgression of Jacob is all this, 5
And for the sins of the house of Israel.
What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria?
And what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?

6, 7. *The doom of Samaria.*

Therefore I will make of Samaria heaps in the field, 6

from which the figures are derived are earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Jer. iv. 23 ff. shows how, to the mind of the prophets, the divine judgment caused by Israel's sin meant nothing short of a cataclysm reducing the earth to chaos.

5. THE CAUSE OF THE DIVINE MANIFESTATION.

*all this*] i. e. the divine manifestation and the consequences thereof.

*Jacob, Israel*] The two names are used interchangeably; the prophet has in mind the entire people. In the second half of the verse, Jacob, in contrast with Judah, designates the northern kingdom.

*What . . . and what*] The Hebrew properly reads: *who . . . and who*. Samaria (Jerusalem) is not merely the seat of Israel's (Judah's) sin (Targum), but its sin personified, made concrete and tangible.

*the high places of Judah*] The Masoretic text is supported by Symmachus and the Vulgate. It gives particular force to the closing part of the verse that the prophet, instead of reserving the specification of the character of Judah's sin for a later part of his address, incorporates it, by way of anticipation, in his very question. "And what are (the prophet pauses; the listener expects the general word "sins"; the prophet proceeds:) the high places of Judah?" On the signification of the term "high places" see Additional Note I.

6, 7. THE DOOM OF SAMARIA.

6. *heaps in the field*] i. e. heaps of stones scattered over a

*And a place for* the planting of vineyards:
And I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley,
And I will uncover the foundations thereof.
7 And all her graven images shall be beaten to pieces,
And all her hires shall be burned with fire,
And all her idols will I lay desolate:
For of the hire of a harlot hath she gathered them,
And to the hire of a harlot shall they return.

field (comp. iii. 12). Perhaps we should read לעיי שדה for לטי השדה.

*and I will pour down*, &c.] From the top of the hill upon which the city was situated (comp. I Kings xvi. 24). This prophecy was made good by John Hyrcanus (Josephus, *Antiquities*, xiii. 28, 1). A plausible emendation reads: *and I will burn the stones thereof into lime* (לנר).

7. *graven images*] Of stone or metal.

*and all her hires*] The "hire" is the payment received by a harlot or by a temple-prostitute (in the impure rites of the Phœnicians in particular, immorality was practised in the worship of a deity, and in the immediate precincts of the temple; comp. Deut. xxiii. 19; Isa. xxiii. 17; Ezek. xvi. 37). The prophets (Hosea and others) represent the idolatrous cult of the Israelites under the figure of conjugal infidelity. In our passage the "hires" apparently designate the votive images placed in the temples by the grateful people or by individuals, for favors believed to have been received from the Baals. They are the bribes paid to the paramour deity (comp. Ezek. xvi. 33 f., 41).

*will I lay desolate*] The verb does not fit the object; perhaps destruction in general is meant.

*of the hire of a harlot*] i. e. of her wealth conceived as the gift of the Baals (comp. Hosea ii. 14; also verses 7–13 and ix. 1; similarly in Isa. xxiii. 17 f. the commerce of Tyre is spoken of as the "hire" of her harlotry with all the world).

*hath she gathered them*] So the Greek Version, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Kimhi (the object, which is wanting in the Hebrew, is easily supplied from the context, = her

8—16. *The prophet bewails the calamity which will overwhelm Judah likewise.*

For this will I wail and howl, 8
I will go stripped and naked:

idols). On the other hand, the Syriac Version, Vulgate, Targum, Samuel ha-Nagid, Ibn Ǧanaḥ, and many moderns take the verb as a passive; hence: *have they been gathered.*

*and to the hire of a harlot shall they return*] Either in the sense that they (the idols, the gold and silver of which they are made) shall be carried away by the victors and placed by them as votive offerings in the temples of their gods (Targum, Ibn Ezra, Ḳimḥi, Ewald, and others); or, preferably, since the idols are doomed to destruction, in a proverbial sense, that they shall go to waste, as money spent on a harlot (Rashi and Wellhausen).

**8—16.** THE PROPHET BEWAILS THE CALAMITY WHICH WILL OVERWHELM JUDAH LIKEWISE. Comp. Isa. xxii. 4.

**8.** *For this*] i. e. the impending destruction of Samaria.

*stripped*] So Vulgate, Ibn Ezra, Ḳimḥi. The Greek Version more specifically: *barefoot,* a symbol of mourning or self-abasement (comp. II Sam. xv. 30; Isa. xx. 2).

*naked*] Comp. Isa. xx. 2 and the apocryphal Ascension of Isaiah, ii. 10. The removal of one's garments was apparently meant to express self-abasement, although in more ancient times it may have expressed passionate grief, and in primitive times may have been associated with superstitious rites. The rending of one's garments frequently referred to in Scripture (II Sam. i. 11; iii. 31, and elsewhere) seems to have been symbolic of the same ideas. The rabbis fix the tear at a hand's-breadth at the breast (Mo'ed ḳaṭon 26*b*, Yoreh De'ah, § 340, 3). According to the Mishnah (Mo'ed ḳaṭon iii. 4), it was customary for mourners to bare their arms and shoulders (see Büchler, *Zeitschr. f. alttestamentl. Wiss.*, xxi. [1901], 81 ff.). Baring the feet (comp. Ezek. xxiv. 17) is prescribed in a Baraita (Mo'ed ḳaṭon 15*b* = Yoreh De'ah, § 382).

I will make a wailing like the jackals,
And a mourning like the ostriches.
9 For her wound is incurable:
For it is come even unto Judah;
It reacheth unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem.
10 Tell it not in Gath,

*like the jackals*] So Syriac Version and Tanhum of Jerusalem (quoted by Roediger). The rendering "dragons" is given by several of the ancient versions and by Saadya and Ibn Ǧanah.

*like the ostriches*] "The cry of the ostrich which is often emitted at night is a loud, dolorous, and stridulous sound, and in the stillness of the desert plains may be heard at a great distance" (Tristram, *Fauna and Flora of Palestine*, p. 109 f., 233 f.).

9. *her wound*] So the Greek and Syriac Versions and the Vulgate. The Hebrew text may be rendered: *for she is incurable as to her wounds* (Joseph Ḳara).

*for it is come*] i. e. the wound, the stroke.

*even unto Judah*] Spreading from Samaria. When Samaria was destroyed (in 722), Judah was not molested. Soon enough (720), however, the Palestinian states were in rebellion. At first Judah seems to have remained neutral. But in 713 another revolt was started by Azuri, king of Ashdod. This time Judah along with Edom and Moab joined in the movement. Ashdod was captured in 711, and quiet restored. Jerusalem escaped the fate of the Philistine city by timely submission. Micah's fears, however, uttered in the beginning of the campaign, were well-grounded (comp. Isa. xx. 1; see Paton, loc. cit., p. 246 ff.).

*it reacheth*] A letter appears to be missing in the Hebrew (read נגעה for נגע).

*unto the gate of my people*] The gate metonymically for the city, the principal part of which was the place before the gate, its political centre. "My people" = Judah.

10. *Tell it not in Gath*] The words are usually interpreted to mean that the tidings of the calamity of Judah should be kept

Weep not at all:
At Beth-le-Aphrah roll thyself in the dust.
Pass ye away, O inhabitant of Shaphir, in nakedness 11
and shame:

from the knowledge of Philistine Gath (comp. II Sam. i. 20). Gath, however, seems to figure here, together with the Judæan villages, as a town along the route of the Assyrian army. The tone appears to be one of mock pity: Tell it not in Gath, for the tidings will be painful to her. The prophet, as in the following instances, plays on the name of the city (*be-Gat al taggidu*). Graetz conjectures that the prophet is alluding to the Judæan Gittaim (II Sam. iv. 3; Neh. xi. 33), or to the Danite Gath-Rimmon (Joshua xix. 45).

*weep not at all*] So all the ancient versions with the exception of the Greek. The latter, aside from misreading the verb (תבכו for תבכו), recognized in the first Hebrew word the name of a town, *Bachim* (not as some manuscripts read, Akko, which lay too far to the north) = *Bochim*, a town near Bethel (comp. Judges ii. 1, 5). The negative still presents a difficulty.

*Beth-le-Aphrah*] Site unknown. The name suggests to the prophet the meaning *Dust-town*.

*roll thyself in*] So the Jewish commentators. The ancient versions for the most part render: *besprinkle thyself with*. In the Hebrew there is an additional play on Philistia (*hitpallashi*); hence the locality must have been situated on or near Philistine territory. Rolling in dust (or covering the head with dust) is a sign of mourning (comp. Joshua vii. 6, and elsewhere), just as sitting or lying in dust is a symbol of humiliation (Isa. xxix. 4 and elsewhere).

11. *Pass ye away*, &c.] The Hebrew text presents considerable difficulty. There is incongruity in number, so far as the first two words are concerned; while a syntactical difficulty attaches to the last two. The paronomasia, it seems, gives way here to thought-incongruity. Shaphir (identified with modern *Sawafir*, S. E. of Ashdod; others think of the Judæan town *Shamir*, Joshua xv. 48, for which a group of Greek manuscripts read *Shaphir*) = *Beauty-town*, is to go into exile (?) with her shame exposed (so Jewish commentators).

The inhabitant of Zaanan is not come forth;
The wailing of Beth-ezel shall take from you the standing-place thereof.
12 For the inhabitant of Maroth waiteth anxiously for good:
Because evil is come down from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem.
13 Bind the chariots to the steeds, O inhabitant of Lachish:

*Zaanan*] Thought to be the same as *Zenan*, Joshua xv. 37; site unknown; = *March-town*.

*is not come forth*] i. e. has not marched out to battle (comp. Amos v. 3), or is shut in by siege (comp. Joshua vi. 1).

*the wailing*, &c.] Beth-ezel unknown. "The standing-place thereof" is supposed to mean the possibility of remaining there, i. e. it will afford you no refuge. But the text is exceedingly dubious.

12. *Maroth*] Site unknown; = *Bitter-town*.

*waiteth anxiously*] So Symmachus, Theodotion, Targum, Ibn Ǧanah, Rashi. The inhabitant of Bitter-town waiting for good — what a contradiction! Aquila, Syriac Version, Vulgate, Menahem bar Helbo, Ibn Ezra, Kimhi translate less plausibly: *is in travail* (anguish) *for the good* (which has passed away).

*because evil*, &c.] Supply: but they will be disappointed.

13. *Bind the chariots to the steeds*] The meaning of the verb is gathered from the context. It is objected that the horse is harnessed to the chariot, and not the reverse. Perhaps, disregarding the accentuation, we ought to render (comp. the Targum): *Bind the chariots, to horse!* The inhabitants of Lachish are admonished to take to flight (Kimhi and others); or, the prophet ironically bids them prepare their chariots and mount their horses —all in vain (nearly so Ibn Ezra). The Hebrew word for steeds (*rekesh*) is chosen as a play on the name of the city.

*Lachish*] A city in the Shephelah, in existence as far back as the fifteenth pre-Christian century. It has been identified with the mound Tell-el-Hesy See F. J. Bliss, *A Mound of Many Cities*; or *Tell-el-Hesy Excavated*, 1898; Flinders Petrie, *Tell-el-Hesy, a Memoir*, 1891. As a fortified city

It is the chiefest sin of the daughter of Zion;
For the transgressions of Israel are found in thee.
Therefore shalt thou give a parting gift to Moresheth-gath: 14

it is mentioned II Chron. xi. 9; Jer. xxxiv. 7. Sennacherib captured it while on his way to Egypt, and sent the Rabshakeh thence to Jerusalem (II Kings xviii. 14, 17; xix. 8). A bas-relief commemorating Sennacherib's successes in Lachish is preserved in the British Museum. In the language of G. A. Smith (*Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 235), it was "an outpost, a customs-station, between Judæa and Egypt; war and commerce both swept past her".

*it*] i. e. the military equipment. Or, *they*, i. e. those chariots and horses. Less plausibly: *she*, i. e. Lachish (Ḳimḥi).

*the chiefest sin*] The sin of Lachish was not "some specific idolatrous cult" (Ibn Ezra, Ḳimḥi), but its horses and chariots and its equipment as a fortress on the Egyptian border. The prophets, as the representatives of the convictions of the Mosaic times, have a natural aversion to the civilization of their day. Treasures of gold and silver which old Israel did not possess, the palatial mansions of the rich, the luxury of the women, and, in a higher degree still, chariots and horses are viewed by them as foreign importations from Nineveh or Babylon or Memphis. The defiant display of human strength which renders the divine help seemingly unnecessary is particularly obnoxious to them. The leaning on the great powers, now on Assyria, now on Egypt, is in their judgment apostasy. The Law (Deut. xvii. 16 f.) forbids the king to keep a large number of horses imported from Egypt, or store up treasures of gold and silver. Solomon, the very opposite of the type of an ideal king, had special cities for his chariots and horses (I Kings ix. 9; x. 26); the latter were imported from Egypt (ibid., x. 28 f.). Lachish apparently was such a city; there were kept the horses and chariots of the king of Judah — the chiefest sin of Zion.

*Israel*] The ideal name for the entire people.

14. *Therefore shalt thou give*] In all probability the "daughter

The houses of Achzib shall be a deceitful thing unto the
kings of Israel.

15 I will yet bring unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah,
him that shall possess thee:
The glory of Israel shall come even unto Adullam.

of Zion" is addressed, although in the verse immediately preceding Lachish is addressed.

*a parting gift*] So Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, Targum, Joseph Kara, Ibn Ezra, Kimhi (comp. I Kings ix. 16); i. e. the gift which a father gives to his daughter on her marriage. The prophet plays on the name of the town which suggests to him the word meaning a betrothed woman (*m[e]oreseth*). Others (Syriac Version, Menahem bar Helbo, Rashi, and many moderns) render: *dismissal*, i. e. divorce. The city is to go into captivity.

*Moresheth-gath*] Apparently the same as the town which was the home of the prophet (see Introduction, § 1). The name indicates that it was situated in the territory of Gath.

*the houses*] Not necessarily the temples (Kimhi), but the entire town with all its houses.

*Achzib*] A Judæan town (Gen. xxxviii. 5; Joshua xv. 44; in the latter passage it is mentioned by the side of Mareshah). The name suggests the adjective following.

*a deceitful thing*] The Hebrew word (*akzab*) is usually applied to the brooks in the steppes, the waters of which dry up in the summer, thus deceiving the traveller (comp. Jer. xv. 18, and especially the beautiful poetic description, Job vi. 15 ff.).

*unto the kings of Israel*] Kings in the plural = dynasty. Israel = Judah.

15. *Mareshah*] Identified with modern *Marash*.

*him that shall possess thee*] In Hebrew (*ha-yoresh*) there is a play on the name of the town.

*the glory*] Either = wealth, or nobility.

*come*] i. e. flee (?).

*Adullam*] Comp. Joshua xv. 35. Modern site not quite certain. There is no play on the name here; possibly the text is corrupt.

Make thee bald, and poll thee for the children of thy 16
delight:
Enlarge thy baldness as the vulture;
For they are gone into captivity from thee.

CHAP. II. 1—5. *The sins of the rich and their corresponding punishment.*

Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon 1
their beds!
When the morning is light, they execute it,
Because it is in the power of their hand.

**16.** *Make thee bald, and poll thee*] Poll = cut the hair of the head. Shaving the head was a mourning custom (comp. Isa. xv. 2, and elsewhere), which, however, is forbidden in the Law (Deut. xiv. 1); probably a sign of grief and self-abasement, though in primitive times perhaps connected with superstitious conceptions.

*the children of thy delight*] i. e. thy tenderly loved children.

*as the vulture*] More specifically the *griffon-vulture* with neck and head "destitute of true feathers, and either naked, or thinly covered with a powdery down" (Tristram, loc. cit., p. 172 ff.).

*they are gone*] The tense is prophetic. Subject: thy children. Of course, the "daughter of Zion" is addressed in the closing verse.

CHAPTER II.

**1—5.** THE SINS OF THE RICH AND THEIR CORRESPONDING PUNISHMENT.

**1.** *and work evil*] "Work" means here the same as "plot" (comp. Ps. lviii. 3).

*upon their beds*] At night time when men are alone with their own thoughts, the pious commune with God (Ps. lxiii. 7), but the wicked devise evil against their fellow-men.

*they execute it*] Comp. Hosea xi. 9; "it" in a neuter sense.

*because it is in the power of their hand*] And "might is right."

2 And when they covet fields,—they seize them;
And *when they covet* houses,—they take them away:
Thus they oppress a man and his house,
Even a man and his heritage.
3 Therefore thus saith the Lord:
Behold, against this family do I devise an evil,
From which ye shall not remove your necks,
Neither shall ye walk upright;
For it shall be an evil time.
4 In that day shall they take up a parable against you,

2. *they covet*] Thus breaking the tenth commandment (Exod. xx. 17).

*seize them*] By violence, as in the case of Naboth (I Kings xxi).

*oppress*] i. e. do injustice to. The injustice is felt not only by the persons, but as it were also by the things. See Additional Note II.

3. *family*] The word in the larger sense for a group of people related by blood, a kindred, tribe, or race. The Hebrew equivalent usually denotes the subdivision of a tribe, a clan (Joshua vii. 14), but also the tribe itself (Judges xiii. 12), and even a larger national aggregate (Jer. x. 25, and elsewhere). See Additional Note III.

*devise an evil*] The punishment corresponds to their sin (comp. verse 1; Joseph Kara).

*remove your necks*] The evil as it will press upon them and keep them down is likened to a yoke. Of course, foreign servitude is meant.

*upright*] i. e. as freemen.

*for it shall be an evil time*] Reference is to the judgment when it comes.

4. *take up a parable*] The Hebrew equivalent (*mashal*) denotes a poem constructed in parallel sentences expressing related ideas, but also in general a prophetic, figurative discourse, in particular one containing veiled allusions of a character at once pathetic and ironical (comp. Isa. xiv. 4; Hab. ii. 6; also Num. xxi. 27).

And lament with a doleful lamentation, *and* say,
'We are utterly undone:
He changeth the portion of my people:
How doth he remove *it* from me!
Instead of restoring our fields, he divideth *them.*'
Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast the line 5
by lot
In the congregation of the Lord.

*and lament with a doleful lamentation*] So Kimhi (similarly Targum and Syriac Version). The Greek Bible and the Vulgate render: *with a melodious lamentation.* Possibly the Hebrew text contains three letters thoughtlessly repeated (נהינהיה). We should perhaps render simply: *and sing a lamentation* (an elegy).

and *say*] Perhaps, with the change of a single letter (ו into ל): *saying.*

*he changeth the portion of my people*] The subject is indefinite; the enemy is meant (Ibn Ǧanaḥ). The verb, however, is inappropriate; perhaps we ought to read with the Greek Version: *he measureth off* (ימוד), i. e. apportions among his own.

*how doth he remove* it *from me*] Or, *how doth* it *depart from me!*

*Instead of restoring*, &c.] So Ibn Ezra and Kimhi. The versions vary in their interpretation of the text which, with minor changes, was read by them all. It is impossible to elicit a satisfactory sense. So much is clear, that the rich landlords who steal the fields of the poor shall be punished in losing them to the enemy (Ibn Ezra).

5. *thou*] The individual belonging to the class of grasping landlords is addressed (Ibn Ezra). Possibly, however, a letter has dropped out in the original (לכם משליך); we should render accordingly: *ye.*

*none*] i. e. neither son nor daughter (Ibn Ezra, Kimhi).

*the line*] i. e. the measuring-cord (comp. II Sam. viii. 2).

*by lot*] Lots, probably consisting of stones put into the fold of a garment (Prov. xvi. 33), or into a vessel, and shaken, were cast, among other purposes,

6, 7. *The rebuked impatient with the stern prophet.*

6 'Talk ye not,' *thus* they talk:
'They shall not talk of these things,
*That* they shall not take shame.'
7 Shall the house of Jacob say,
'Is the spirit of the Lord waxed short?

for the assignment of property (comp. Num. xxvi. 33–36). The reference is to the distribution of a man's property among his children after his death.

*in the congregation of the Lord*] A solemn name for the people of Israel. Membership therein is every Israelite's by birth; exactly as he succeeds to his patrimony upon the death of his father, so does he take his father's place in the community, both in the smaller community of the town and in the larger community of the nation. See Additional Note III.

6, 7. THE REBUKED IMPATIENT WITH THE STERN PROPHET.

6. '*Talk ye not,*' thus *they talk*] The rebuked sinners address prophets like Micah with the request that they shall not talk to them (Ibn Ezra, Kimhi, Ewald). Amos and Isaiah record similar experiences (Amos vii. 16; Isa. xxx. 10 f.). There is a contemptuous note in the Hebrew verb, which properly means to "drop," or "drivel," with reference to the drivelling mouth of the common prophets in their fits of epileptic ecstasy.

*they shall not talk*, &c.] So Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Kimhi. The people are supposed to be speaking one to another. The prophets must not talk of these things, of punishment and the like. If they do, they will receive ignominious treatment at our hands.

7. *Shall the house of Jacob say*] The rendering presupposes the slight change of a vowel (האמוֹר for האמוּר), which seems to be supported by the Targum. The prophet anticipates the people's query, or really hears it, and expresses his astonishment.

*Is the spirit of the Lord waxed short*] In the idiom of the Biblical language, *long of spirit* means "patient," "forbearing," and *short of spirit*, "impatient." *Spirit* is used in the sense of "temper," especially "anger."

Are these His doings?'
Do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly?

8—10. *The doings of the rich once more described.*

But of late they have made of My people an enemy; 8
With the garment, ye strip also the mantle

Is the Lord, ask the people in feigned piety, given to anger and impatience?

*Are these His doings*] i. e. are the punishments announced by the prophet (verse 3 ff.) consonant with the divine character?

*Do not My words*, &c.] The Lord's answer to the people's query; or the prophet's answer to his own question. The prophets frequently identify themselves with the Lord in whose name they speak. The Lord's words are at once His deeds (Ps. xxxiii. 9; Isa. lv. 11); hence it can be said of them that they do good.

*to him that walketh uprightly*] Why, then, O house of Jacob, do you not change your conduct? Walk uprightly, and the Lord will rejoice to do you good. If you persist in your evil conduct, the Lord must punish you, though it be contrary to His nature to punish.

8—10. THE DOINGS OF THE RICH ONCE MORE DESCRIBED.

8. *of late*] Hebrew: *yesterday* (so the Greek Version, Symmachus, and the Midrash [Exod. rabba, ch. xlii], which, with a view to the present passage, remarks that Israel's enthusiasm, displayed at the time of the divine manifestation on Mount Sinai, lasted but one day: "Yesterday ye said, We will do and hearken [Exod. xxiv. 7], but to-day, This is thy God, O Israel [ibid., xxxii. 4]"), i. e. the other day, quite recently, thus emphasizing the contrast between the accusations which they bring forward against the haste of the divine punishment, and their own wickedness. Aquila, Targum, Rashi, Ibn Ǧanaḥ, on the other hand, take the Hebrew in the sense of "against." See the following note.

*they have made of My people*

From them that pass by securely, so that they are as
they that return from war.

9 The women of My people ye cast out from their pleasant
houses;
From their young children ye take away My glory for
ever.

10 Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your resting-place:

*an enemy*] This is the approximate sense of the Hebrew. "They," impersonal subject; *you* (Ibn Ǧanaḥ, Wellhausen) would suit the context much better. "My people," i. e. the poor classes (comp. Exod. xxii. 24; Kimḥi). Menaḥem bar Ḥelbo renders less plausibly: *My people is risen up as an enemy.* The text may have read originally: *But ye rise up as an enemy against My people* (Wellhausen).

*with the garment, ye strip also the mantle*] So Joseph Kimḥi. The garment is the poor man's cover by night (Exod. xxii. 25 f.). The mantle (read perhaps אדרת הפשטון) need not be a pretentious cloak (of the kind described in Joshua vii. 21), but a plain mantle similar to those worn by the prophets (I Kings xix. 13; Zech. xiii. 4).

*from them that pass by*, &c.] So the Jewish commentators. Peaceful passers-by are maltreated, stripped of their garments and despoiled as those who come back from war. The text is difficult.

9. *The women of My people*, &c.] The allusion is unclear. It is possible that the prophet has in mind the ejection of poor tenants from their dwellings. Even women and children are not spared.

*My glory*] No satisfactory explanation can be given of the word "glory" in the present context. The text is certainly obscure.

10. *Arise ye, and depart*] The Greek Version has the singular: *Arise thou, and depart.* The people as a whole, or the community, is addressed: Depart hence into exile.

*for this is not your resting-place*] The Greek reads: *for it is not for thee, this resting-place.* Palestine is called a place of rest for Israel (Deut. xii. 9); but it is not for you; you must go hence.

Because of the uncleanness *thereof*, it shall destroy *you*,
even with a sore destruction.

11. *The popular prophet.*

If a man walking in wind and falsehood do lie, *saying*, 11
'I will talk unto thee of wine and of strong drink';
He shall even be the prophet of this people.

12, 13. *A passage of disputed meaning and connection.*

I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; 12
I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;
I will render them all as sheep in a sheepfold:

*because of the uncleanness thereof*] i. e. because you have defiled the land by your evil deeds. The Torah (Lev. xviii. 25 ff.) speaks of Palestine as defiled by the Canaanites and warns Israel not to imitate their abominations, "that the land vomit not you out also, when ye defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you."

*it shall destroy*, &c.] So Kimhi. Probably, however, on the basis of the Greek Version, we should read: *ye shall be destroyed, even with a sore*, or complete, *destruction* (תחבֻּלוּ חבל).

11. THE POPULAR PROPHET.

*walking in wind*] i. e. following after wind, after things as unsubstantial and delusive as the wind; the second noun explains the first.

*I will talk*, &c.] The easy-going, flattering false prophet is introduced as speaking. He deludes the people with the assurance that all is well, and that no evil need be feared.

*he shall even be*, &c.] Such prophets are acceptable to the people. Contrast the unpopular prophet who preaches of duty and of the punishment which must follow its infringement (verse 6).

12, 13. A PASSAGE OF DISPUTED MEANING AND CONNECTION. See Introduction, § 8.

12. *I will render them all*] Supply from the end of the verse: a bustling, noisy mass of people. The English Bible (*I will put*

As a flock in the midst of their pasture,
They shall make great noise by reason of *the multitude of* men.

13 The breaker is gone up before them:
They have broken forth and passed on,
By the gate, and are gone out thereat:
And their king is passed on before them,
And the Lord at the head of them.

*them together*) misunderstands the Hebrew idiom.

*as sheep in a sheepfold*] The rendering (Targum followed by Rashi, Vulgate, and apparently also Aquila and Symmachus) implies perhaps a different vocalization (*be-ṣirah*; in Arabic the word means "enclosure for cattle"). The English Version (following Ibn Ezra and Kimhi) takes the Hebrew word as Bozrah, capital of the land of Edom (Amos i. 12). Others think of the Moabite Bozrah (Jer. xlviii. 24; the same as Bezer, Deut. iv. 43). Moab was a land rich in cattle, particularly in sheep (II Kings iii. 4). The sheep of Bozrah or Bezer may have been as famous as the kine of Bashan (Amos iv. 1), or the rams of Nebaioth (Isa. lx. 7).

*as a flock in the midst of their pasture*] The Hebrew presents a mixture of two readings: (1) *a pasture*; (2) *their pasture*.

*they*] The grammatical subject in Hebrew is the word sheep, to which the verbal form is contiguous, but the logical subject is clearly the people, Jacob-Israel.

*shall make great noise*] i. e. the loud, indistinct, confused noise of a large mass of people.

13. *The breaker*] i. e. the bell-wether, which breaks through the gate of the enclosure first (Ibn Ezra). Some ancients (the Targum followed by Rashi, Vulgate) understand by the breaker the redeemer who is to lead the people out of exile, or the one who will pave the way for the advent of the Messiah (Elijah; so an ancient Midrash quoted by Kimhi; comp. also Gen. rabba, ch. lxxxv), or the Lord Himself (so Lev. rabba, ch. xxxii, and apparently Pesikta rabbeti, ed. Friedmann,

CHAP. III. 1—4. *Arraignment of the ruling class.*

And I said,
Hear, I pray you, ye heads of Jacob,
And rulers of the house of Israel:
Is it not for you to know justice?
Who hate the good, and love the evil;

p. 161). Joseph Kimhi believes that Zedekiah is referred to, who fled from Jerusalem by night, "by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden" (Jer. lii. 7; comp. Ezek. xii. 12). It is worthy of note that a manuscript of the Greek Bible (cod. 91 in Holmes-Parsons) contains the word Zedekiah above the word "king."

*they have broken forth and passed on*] The people follow close upon the breaker.

*by the gate*] Supply: they have broken.

*their king*] i. e. the Messiah; or, the Lord Himself (comp. Jer. viii. 19).

CHAPTER III.

1—4. ARRAIGNMENT OF THE RULING CLASS. Their principal sin consists in the maladministration of justice. The prophet announces their punishment.

1. *And I said*] The pronoun is without stress. A fresh start.

*rulers*] i. e. men in authority. The Hebrew word (*kasin*) is perhaps related to the Arabic *kadi*(*n*), "judge."

*is it not for you*] i. e. your province and duty.

*to know*] That is: *to regard. Knowing*, in Hebrew, often implies, above mere intellectual cognition, taking note of an object, considering it of value or moment so as to care for it.

*justice*] i. e. right relations between men, more particularly between the rich and the poor, or, more abstractly, the idea of just relationship or of right.

2. *Who hate*, &c.] Properly the prophet meant to say, *Ye hate*, &c., this being the subject to which he invites the attention of the leaders addressed in verse 1; but, carried away by indignation, with his finger, so to speak, still pointed at them, he continues, beyond the query at the end of verse 1, in the same style of direct ad-

Who rob their skin from off them,
And their flesh from off their bones;
3 Who also eat the flesh of my people,
And flay their skin from off them,
And break their bones:
Yea, they chop them in pieces, as meat in the pot,
And as flesh within the caldron.
4 Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but He will not answer them:
Yea, He will hide His face from them at that time,
According as they have wrought evil in their doings.

dress. The construction, though logically at fault, is for that reason all the more forcible.

*the good*] i. e. that which is morally good.

*the evil*] i. e. that which is morally evil. They thus invert values (comp. Isa. v. 20; Amos v. 14 f.).

*who rob their skin*, &c.] Hyperbolical language describing the heartlessness with which the rich proceed against the poor, robbing them of all their possessions through usury and exactions in excess of what is due or proper, generally with some show of legal formality, but often unfairly and under false pretences (comp. for similar complaints Amos ii. 6 f.; iii. 9 f.; iv. 1; v. 11 f.; Isa. iii. 14 f.; Jer. v. 27, and elsewhere). The pronouns have no antecedent; but the reference is perfectly obvious.

3. *who also eat the flesh of my people*] Like sheep the poor are not only fleeced, but eaten up (comp. Zech. xi. 16).

*and break their bones*] They are eaten up, flesh and bones.

*yea, they chop them in pieces*] "Them," i. e. the poor.

*as meat in the pot*] So read with the Greek Version (כישאר for כאשר).

4. *Then*] i. e. in that evil day of reckoning.

*but He will not answer them*] Exactly as they refused to heed the cry of the poor.

*yea, He will hide His face*] The Lord is said to lift up His countenance (Num. vi. 26), when

5—8. *The doings of the mercenary prophets and their fate. Micah contrasts their flattering speeches with his own courageous castigation of Israel's sin.*

Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make 5
my people to err;
That cry, Peace, when their teeth have any thing to bite;
And whoso putteth not into their mouths,
They even prepare war against him:

He is favorably inclined; conversely, when He withdraws His favor, He is said to hide His face (Deut. xxxi. 17 f.; Isa. viii. 17, and elsewhere; comp. also Isa. lix. 2; Job xiii. 24; xix. 25 ff.). Similarly the rabbis say that certain sins cause the Divine Presence (Shekinah) to withdraw from Israel (Yebamot 64 *a*).

5—8. THE DOINGS OF THE MERCENARY PROPHETS AND THEIR FATE. MICAH CONTRASTS THEIR FLATTERING SPEECHES WITH HIS OWN COURAGEOUS CASTIGATION OF ISRAEL'S SIN.

After the rulers, the prophets come next in order as those who misguide the people. The first prophet whom we find in conflict with the false prophets is the namesake of our prophet, Micaiah ben Imlah (I Kings xxii). Jeremiah is particularly bitter against them (Jer. ch. xxiii, and elsewhere); we find them inveighed against also in Ezekiel (ch. xiii; comp. also Lam. ii. 14).

5. *that make my people to err*] Comp. Isa. iii. 12; ix. 15.

*that cry, Peace,* &c.] For a consideration, say a stipend from an influential personage, they delude the nation with their optimistic prophecies (comp. for an example Hananiah's prophecy, Jer. xxviii. 2 ff.), "saying, Peace, peace, while there is no peace" (Jer. vi. 14; Ezek. xiii. 10).

*they even prepare war against him*] Not in the sense of a private feud, but, when their stipend is withdrawn, they announce, to the annoyance of their former political friends in high office, that war is imminent. In Hebrew the phrase reads: *they sanctify war* (comp. Jer. vi. 4, and elsewhere). The Greeks commenced their wars with sacrifices of the most solemn kind (the sacrifice of Iphigenia!). It was the custom in the early

6 Therefore it shall be night unto you, that ye shall have
no vision;
And it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine;
And the sun shall go down upon the prophets,
And the day shall be black over them.
7 And the seers shall be put to shame, and the diviners
confounded;
Yea, they shall all cover their upper lips:
For there shall be no answer of God.

period of Israelitish history to open a campaign with a burnt-offering (Judges vi. 20; I Sam. vii. 9; xiii. 10). The sacrifice constituted the consecration of the warriors (comp. Isa. xiii. 3, and Luzzatto's commentary, ad locum) who, while the campaign lasted, were subject to certain restrictions otherwise imposed upon pilgrims bound for the sanctuary (see W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 1894, p. 401 ff.; 454 ff.). Of course, the phrase persisted long after the primitive ideas concerning the sacred nature of war had passed away. The ancient versions paraphrase in the manner of the English Bible.

6. *night*] i. e. mental darkness as a result of the suddenness of the catastrophe (comp. Isa. xxix. 10 f.).

*that ye shall not divine*] Hebrew: *kasam*. From the Arabic we know that the word designates "divining by lot." For a description of the Arab method of divination by means of arrows, see Driver's Commentary on Deuteronomy, p. 223 f.; comp. also Ezek. xxi. 26 f. for a Scriptural illustration. The Torah (Deut. xviii. 9 ff.) prohibits all manner of divination, and institutes the office of the prophet, the legitimate successor to Moses. Just as the latter is the type of the right kind of a prophet, Balaam represents the heathen diviner (Joshua xiii. 22; Num. xxii. 7). The term "diviner" is applied in the Bible to heathen soothsayers (comp. I Sam. vi. 2), or disparagingly to the false prophets of Israel (comp. Isa. iii. 2; Jer. xxvii. 9; Ezek. xiii. 9, and elsewhere).

7. *their upper lips*] The Hebrew word properly denotes the

But I truly am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, 8
And of justice, and of might,
To declare unto Jacob his transgression,
And to Israel his sin.

9—12. *A summary of the sins of the three leading classes, rulers, priests, and prophets. The inevitable catastrophe.*

Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, 9
And rulers of the house of Israel,
That abhor justice, and pervert all equity;

hair on the upper lip. Covering the beard was a sign of mourning (Ezek. xxiv. 17) or humiliation (Lev. xiii. 45). Whatever the origin of the various mourning rites, they came to mean the reversal of the ordinary habits of life, in food and dress and the like. The beard, which was considered the ornament of manhood (II Sam. x. 4; the rabbis speak of it as "beauty of the countenance," Baba mesi'a 84 *a*), was either shaved (Jer. xli. 5), or else covered up. The rabbis prescribe that the mourner cover head and cheeks after the fashion of the Arabs (Mo'ed katon 15 *a*; 24 *a*); this rite, however, later fell into disuse (Yoreh De'ah, § 386).

*answer of God*] The term is not specifically Israelitish.

8. *But I*] The prophet contrasts himself with the false prophets.

*by the spirit of the Lord*] The implication is that the false prophets are not in communion with the spirit of the Lord. The spirit that is in them is the spirit of falsehood, to whose agency Micaiah ben Imlah ascribes the delusions of the false prophets (I Kings xxii. 22 f.).

*justice*] i. e. a sense of what is right.

*might*] The true prophet does not flatter. He speaks the truth. He has convictions as to right and wrong, and he possesses the manhood to speak them out.

10 That build up Zion with blood,
And Jerusalem with iniquity.
11 The heads thereof judge for reward,
And the priests thereof teach for hire,
And the prophets thereof divine for money:
Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say,
'Is not the Lord in the midst of us?
No evil shall come upon us.'

**9—12.** A SUMMARY OF THE SINS OF THE THREE LEADING CLASSES, RULERS, PRIESTS, AND PROPHETS. THE INEVITABLE CATASTROPHE.

**10.** *that build up Zion with blood*] Either with the actual shedding of blood through judicial murder (I Kings xxi; comp. Ezek. xxii. 27), or by working the poor to death and thus enriching themselves, so that their palaces are, as it were, built with the blood of the poor. Jeremiah upbraids King Jehoiakim for failure to pay the workmen who built his palace (Jer. xxii. 13). Comp. also Amos v. 11; Hab. ii. 12.

*iniquity*] i. e. unfairness, the opposite of equity.

**11.** *The heads*] i. e. the rulers, those in high office.

*for reward*] i. e. for a bribe (comp. Isa. i. 23, and elsewhere).

*and the priests thereof teach for hire*] The priests who are consulted by the people as to what is right or wrong (Lev. x. 10 f., and elsewhere) are accused of venality. The questions which the priests were called upon to decide comprised the entire sphere of the religious and moral life; it was within their power either to quicken or deaden the people's conscience. Complaints against the priests meet us elsewhere in the prophetic literature (Hosea iv. 4 ff.; v. 1; vi. 9; Jer. ii. 8; Zeph. iii. 4; Ezek. xxii. 26).

*divine*] The disparaging term is purposely chosen.

*yet will they lean*, &c.] The form is that of an indignant question indicating the absurdity of their position.

*Is not the Lord*, &c.] Comp. Amos iii. 2; v. 24; ix. 10; Jer. v. 12; vii. 4; viii. 8.

Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, 12
And Jerusalem shall become heaps,
And the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.

**12**. *for your sake*] i. e. on account of your sins (Targum).

*be plowed as a field*] Comp. i. 6.

*heaps*] i. e. heaps of stones, ruins.

*high places of a forest*] i. e. mounds amidst uncultivated surroundings, in the wild woods.

This verse is quoted Jer. xxvi. 18. Jeremiah is accused of high treason, because he predicted the destruction of Jerusalem in an address resembling in general purport the last section of our chapter and preserved Jer. vii. 1 ff. He is rescued from death at the hands of the offended princes, prophets, and priests, by Ahikam the son of Shaphan. Some of the elders adduce on this occasion the instance of Micah, who was permitted to prophesy in the same manner in the days of Hezekiah. It is stated there (verse 19) that Hezekiah took Micah's prophecy to heart and implored the Lord's forgiveness, whereupon the Lord refrained from carrying out the evil which He had threatened to bring upon the people. Possibly this was the time when Hezekiah set about destroying the high places (II Kings xviii. 4, 22). The reform was, of course, ineffectual, Hezekiah being succeeded by idolatrous kings. Similarly the more comprehensive reform of Josiah was made inoperative by his successors.

The true prophet, who is filled with a deep sense of the right, and is manly enough to give utterance to his views, will, of course, be unpopular. The people always prefer the easy-going prophet, who himself loves wine and song, to the stern castigator of their vices, who is not satisfied with half-hearted allegiance, but demands the absolute surrender of all that is hollow and false, and complete devotion to truth and justice. The true prophets, nevertheless, though hated and laughed at as visionaries, are on the whole the inviolable men of God even to their enemies. At times such prophets sway a pious monarch like Hezekiah, and some of their visions become real. And no matter what may be

CHAPTERS IV—VII. *Consolatory prophecies concerning the restoration, the second exodus, the Messianic kingdom of peace, and the glorious future of purified Zion in the end of days. Interspersed are denunciations of the present order of things with its disruption of all social bonds and its perverse notions concerning the service of the Lord.*

CHAP. IV. 1—4. *The future glory of Zion. Paradise Regained. An ancient prophecy.*

1 'But in the end of days it shall come to pass,
'That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the top of the mountains,

their standing in the community of their own day, their words are accepted by posterity as the true words of God, while the oracles of their antagonists perish with those that utter them. Such is the power of a word spoken from the fulness of conviction, in the service of justice and truth, and by the grace of the spirit of the Lord.

CHAPTERS IV—VII. CONSOLATORY PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE RESTORATION, THE SECOND EXODUS, THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM OF PEACE, AND THE GLORIOUS FUTURE OF PURIFIED ZION IN THE END OF DAYS. INTERSPERSED ARE DENUNCIATIONS OF THE PRESENT ORDER OF THINGS WITH ITS DISRUPTION OF ALL SOCIAL BONDS AND ITS PERVERSE NOTIONS CONCERNING THE SERVICE OF THE LORD.

On Micah as the author of these chapters as well as on the sequence of the parts, see Introduction, § 8, where the arguments to the contrary are refuted.

## CHAPTER IV.

1—4. THE FUTURE GLORY OF ZION. PARADISE REGAINED. AN ANCIENT PROPHECY.

1. *in the end of days*] A prophetic phrase denoting a future period, particularly the close thereof, so far as the speaker's

'And it shall be exalted above the hills:
'And peoples shall flow unto it.

perspective reaches. Thus it is used of the period of Israel's possession of Canaan (Gen. xlix. 1), or of the period of Israel's future conquest of Moab and Edom (Num. xxiv. 14), or of the period of calamity ensuing upon Israel's apostasy (Deut. xxxi. 29), or of the period of Israel's return to God in the exile (ibid., iv. 30). Usually, however, the phrase denotes either the period ushering in the ideal, or Messianic, age (the time of the final attack by the heathen upon Israel, Ezek. xxxviii. 16; Dan. x. 14), or the Messianic age itself. So here (see Shabbat 63 *a*). Comp. Hosea iii. 5.

*the mountain of the Lord's house*] The Temple hill is meant.

*established*] i. e. firm.

*as the top of the mountains*] i. e. the highest mountain. In view of Ezek. xl. 2 and Zech. xiv. 10, it is conceivable that the prophet has in mind physical elevation (see Rashi and Kimhi on the passages quoted). In the highly poetical passage Isa. xiv. 13 we read of a "mount of assembly" of the gods, an Oriental Olympus, in the farthest north, high above the stars. (See article *Sinai* in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* for Babylonian parallels and for the cosmological conceptions involved.) Ezekiel (xxviii. 13 f.) identifies the "sacred mountain of God" with "Eden, the garden of God," where, according to the prophet's version of the story of the fall, lived the first man, wise and magnificent, until he presumed to play the equal of God, and was expelled. The sacred writers, when speaking of the future Zion, frequently invest it with the elements characteristic of the "paradise". Thus Ezekiel (xlvii. 1–12) predicts for the future Zion a marvellous stream, which, issuing thence, shall go forth to the eastern region and transform the salt water of the Dead Sea into fresh water, while on each bank there shall grow trees whose leaves shall not wither, nor their fruit fail, the latter serving for food, and the former for healing. A perennial stream of "living waters" is promised in Zech. xiv. 8 (comp. Joel iv. 18). It is "the river, the

2 'And many nations shall go and say,
'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
'And to the house of the God of Jacob;
'And He will teach us of His ways,
'And we will walk in His paths:
'For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
'And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holiest dwelling of the Most High" (Ps. xlvi. 5), the "river of pleasure" (*'adanim*), the river of paradise (*Eden*), the "fountain of life" (Ps. xxxvi. 9 f.). And so Mount Zion is called "the farthest ends of the north" (Ps. xlviii. 3), with unmistakable allusion to the "mountain of assembly" (see Luzzatto on Isa. xiv. 13, and Gunkel's Commentary on Genesis, 1902, p. 30 ff.). So also in the present passage, wherein the advent of the golden age on Mount Zion is prophesied, its elevation above all the mountains of the earth is fittingly emphasized in the very opening, thus clearly designating Zion as Paradise Regained in the end of days. The tone of the passage, however, would suggest that, while the prophet is borrowing ancient phraseology, he is at the same time spiritualizing it, and that the elevation of Mount Zion is taken by him in a figurative sense (Ibn Ezra; Kimhi on our passage). Zion is to be the spiritual centre of the world (comp. Isa. xi. 10; the Messiah the "banner" of the nations, a signal seen far and wide and attracting the nations).

*flow*] i. e. move in unbroken succession (comp. Zech. viii. 20 ff.).

**2.** *and say*] to one another.

*of His ways*] perhaps, *out* (of the treasure) *of His ways*, or simply, *His ways*. The ways of the Lord are His moral and religious precepts. The Lord teaches through His representatives (prophets, priests, the Messiah, His people).

*for*, &c.] An explanatory remark by the prophet.

*instruction*] Hebrew: *torah*. Instruction in the various duties of life is meant.

'And He shall judge between many peoples, 3
'And shall decide concerning mighty nations afar off;
'And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
'And their spears into pruning-hooks:
'Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
'Neither shall they learn war any more.
'But they shall sit every man under his vine and under 4
his fig-tree;
'And none shall make them afraid:
'For the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.'

3. *And He shall judge between many peoples*] When the Lord is universally acknowledged, He will judge between nations and arbitrate for peoples. In Israel, whenever two persons have a dispute, they come to the sanctuary of the Lord and abide by the decision of His representatives (Exod. xxii. 8; Deut. xvii. 8 ff.). While at present only private feuds are thus terminated, in the future disputes between nations will be adjusted in the same manner. The abolition of war is a consequence of the universal recognition of the sovereignty of the God of Israel. The pilgrimage of humanity to Mount Zion will lead to a permanent and real truce of God. In the language of the liturgy, mankind will then form a single band (comp. the Authorised Daily Prayer Book with a new translation, by the Rev. S. Singer, p. 239).

*plowshares*] Or, perhaps, *spades*. People will settle down to peaceful occupations; weapons and military science will be a matter of the past. Comp. Isa. xi. 6–10; Hosea ii. 20; Zech. ix. 10; and, on the other hand, Joel iv (iii). 10. The Talmud (Shabbat 63*a*) adds that in the Messianic age arms will not be considered even an ornament; they will be out of place as a candle in daylight.

4. *they*] i. e. all mankind.

*under his vine and under his fig-tree*] A picture of utmost security.

*the Lord of hosts*] Hebrew *Adonai Sebaot*. Whatever the meaning of the combination may have been in primitive times,

5. *A lesson for Israel in the present order of things.*

5 For all the peoples walk each one in the name of its god,
And we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

6, 7. *The gathering of the dispersed and the constitution of the "remnant."*

6 In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that is lame,

it is conceded that the prophets connected with it the conception of supermundane power or majesty (see article *Names* in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, § 123; also Luzzatto on Isa. i. 9). The Greek Version renders it usually by "Lord of the powers, or forces," or "the Almighty God," or "Lord Almighty."

*hath spoken it*] And therefore will surely bring it to pass (Ibn Ezra, Kimhi).

5. A LESSON FOR ISRAEL IN THE PRESENT ORDER OF THINGS.

*walk*] in the present tense (Abrabanel), or, perhaps, *will walk*, not in a future sense, but implying a natural habit.

*in the name*] i. e. invoking it.

*of its god*] Or, *gods*, "which yet are no gods" (Jer. ii. 11).

*and we will walk in the name of the Lord*] The Living God, who in the end of days will be recognized by all mankind. The prophet, so to speak, comes down to earth; with a view to the deplorable conditions of the present, when the nations are divided, holding fast to their religious traditions, it behooves Israel the more steadfastly to cling to its own religion, which is the true religion destined to survive all others (comp. Isa. ii. 5).

6, 7. THE GATHERING OF THE DISPERSED AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE "REMNANT."

6. *In that day*] An indefinite phrase. The point in time contemplated by the prophet here is anterior to the period described in the opening of the chapter. The gathering of the dispersed must naturally precede the constitution of the ideal community on Mount Zion.

And I will gather her that is driven away,
And her that I have afflicted;
And I will make her that was lame a remnant, 7
And her that was cast far off a mighty nation:
And the Lord shall reign over them from thenceforth
even for ever.

*her that is lame*] Israel in exile is likened to maimed and lost sheep (comp. Zeph. iii. 19).

*and her that I have afflicted*] The figurative language in the first half of the verse is thus explained.

7. *a remnant*] The "remnant" is the community at the time of the Messianic restoration. The idea that the sinful nation must undergo a sifting process is an ancient one. Just as certain as it is to the prophets that the bulk of the nation is doomed to perdition, the national disaster is by no means complete national extinction to them. No matter how small the number of those "whose knees have not bowed unto Baal" (I Kings xix. 18; comp. Judges vii. 5 ff.), they constitute the remnant that is to be saved. As Elijah, so does Amos distinguish between the sinful kingdom that is destined to annihilation, and the righteous nucleus of the future house of Jacob that is indestructible (Amos ix. 8; comp. v. 15). Isaiah symbolically named one of his sons Shear-jashub, i. e. A—remnant—shall—return (Isa. vii. 3). The people must go through a smelting process (Mal. iii. 2 f.): the privileged few who are entered in the Book of the Living (the Book of Life) constitute the holy "remnant," those who are escaped or left (Isa. iv. 2 f.; x. 20 ff.; xxxvii. 31; comp. Zeph. iii. 13, and elsewhere in the prophetic literature). The community that survived the fall of Jerusalem, whether under Jeremiah (Jer. xl. 15) or under Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra ix. 8), knew itself as the "remnant" and as the bearer of the prophetic promises. And so in the liturgy we designate ourselves as the remnant and pray: "O Guardian of Israel, guard the remnant of Israel, and suffer not Israel to perish, who say, Hear, O Israel. O Guardian of the one nation, guard the remnant of the one people, and

8—10. *The revival of the Davidic kingdom. The exile but a transition to the glorious future.*

8 And thou, Migdal-eder, the hill of the daughter of Zion,
Unto thee shall it come;
Yea, the former dominion shall come,
The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.
9 Now why dost thou cry out aloud?

let not the one nation perish, who confess Thy Unity. O Guardian of the holy nation, guard the remnant of the holy people, and suffer not the holy nation to perish, who call Thee thrice Holy" (Singer's Prayer Book, p. 64 f.).

*and her that was cast far off*] Or, with a slight change in one letter (והנחלאה for והנחלאה), *and her that was sick*.

8—10. THE REVIVAL OF THE DAVIDIC KINGDOM. THE EXILE BUT A TRANSITION TO THE GLORIOUS FUTURE.

8. *Migdal-eder*] The place is mentioned Gen. xxxv. 21, and in the Mishnah (Shekalim vii. 4), as a place near Jerusalem. The English Version: *O tower of the flock*. The prophet, addressing Jerusalem in ruins, calls it, as it were, a solitary flock-tower in the desert, the settlement of a shepherd and his household (comp. II Kings xvii. 9; II Chron. xxvi. 10). It is possible, however, that with the same end in view, the prophet chooses the name of the older and more modest settlement in or near Jerusalem, which the passage in Genesis places in patriarchal times.

*the hill of the daughter of Zion*] "Hill," or "stronghold," is the commonly accepted rendering of the Hebrew *'ofel* (comp. Isa. xxxii. 14). The *Ophel* as a part of Jerusalem (S. E. slope of the Temple hill?) is mentioned Neh. iii. 26 f.; xi. 21, and II Chron. xxvii. 3; xxxiii. 14. "The hill of the daughter of Zion" is probably a poetic appellation for the hill of Zion (comp. Isa. x. 32: "the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem"), in apposition with Migdal-eder.

*it*] Supply the subject (*the dominion* or *kingdom*) from the second half of the verse.

*the former*] i. e. Davidic.

9. The prophet is addressing

Is there no King in thee,
Is thy Counsellor perished,
That pangs have taken hold of thee as of a woman in travail?
Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail:
For now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and shalt dwell in the field,
And shalt come even unto Babylon; there shalt thou be rescued,
There shall the Lord redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.

the city in the throes of the siege on the eve of the exile; he bids her be of good courage, since the exile will be but the transition to a glorious future.

*Now*] In a logical sense, = *hence*.

*cry out aloud*] So Ibn Ezra and Kimhi.

*Is there no King*, &c.] The King and Counsellor is the Lord (Ibn Ezra, Kimhi, Marti; comp. Jer. viii. 19).

*that pangs have taken hold*, &c.] Comp. Jer. vi. 24; xxii. 23.

**10.** *Be in pain*] The agony which Israel about to be exiled is experiencing shall be, in the language of the rabbis (Mekilta on Exod. xvi. 25 and 30; Shabbat 118*a*, and elsewhere), the "throes of the Messiah," ushering in new life, the glorious Messianic future.

*and labour to bring forth*] So Ibn Ezra. It is the crisis of a new life born in pain.

*now*] In contrast with *then*, implied in *there*.

*in the field*] The city is contrasted with the field where one is beset by all the dangers from which one is safe in the former.

*and shalt come even unto Babylon*] See Introduction, § 8.

*there*] The Greek and Syriac Versions: *thence*.

**11—13.** THE FINAL ASSAULT OF THE HEATHEN WORLD.

Even when rescued from the exile and brought back to Jerusalem, they shall be subjected to one more final assault. Many nations

11—13. *The final assault of the heathen world.*

11 And now many nations are assembled against thee,
That say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye gaze upon Zion.
12 But they know not the thoughts of the Lord,
Neither understand they His counsel:
For He hath gathered them as the sheaves to the threshing-floor.
13 Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion:
For I will make thy horn iron,
And I will make thy hoofs brass:

will gather about Jerusalem, but they shall be routed. The appearance of a great heathen force about Jerusalem on the eve of the Messianic age and its definitive overthrow form part of the traditional programme in the prophetic eschatology (comp. Isa. x. 12; xiv. 24–27; xvii. 12–14; Joel iv [iii]; Zech. ix. 14–16; xii. 1–9, and elsewhere). Ezekiel (chapters xxxviii and xxxix) designates the assailants as the hosts of Gog (Magog). From Scripture the Gog-Magog episode in the advent of the Messianic kingdom has passed on to the rabbis who make frequent reference thereto (Berakot 13*a*; Sanhedrin 95*b*, and elsewhere). In the liturgy, the passing away from the earth of the arrogant kingdom with all its wickedness ushers in the everlasting Kingdom of God (Singer's Prayer Book, p. 239).

**11.** *now*] i. e. at an indefinite period in the future.

*Let her be defiled*] From the prophet's point of view. Jerusalem is holy, when no strangers pass through her (comp. Joel iv [iii]. 17).

*gaze upon*] i. e. with malicious joy.

**12.** Comp. Isa. xiv. 24, 26 f.

*counsel*] i. e. plan.

*for*, &c.] Exposition of the divine plan.

**13.** *and thresh*] As a heifer (comp. Hosea x. 11).

*for I will make thy horn iron*] Wherewith to gore the assailant (comp. Deut. xxxiii. 17). The figure of the threshing animal is let go to be taken up forthwith.

And thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples:
And thou shalt devote their gain unto the Lord,
And their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.

14. *Extreme humiliation of Zion and of her ruler during a siege of the city.*

Now shalt thou cut thyself, O daughter of troops: 14
'They have laid siege against us,
They smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.'

*beat in pieces many peoples*] i. e. make dust of them.

*thou*] So the ancient versions and apparently also the Hebrew text (archaic form).

*devote*] Or, *ban*. Consecration by means of the "ban" implies absolute withdrawal from human use. Both persons and things may be "banned," turned over to the sanctuary, which, in certain cases, may order their destruction. The "ban" is prescribed in the Torah (Deut. vii. 2, 25 f.; xx. 16–18) for the cities and religious symbols of the Canaanites; the spoil is to be "devoted" either wholly or in part according to the gravity of the situation. The war upon the nations gathered about Jerusalem for a final assault is thus designated as a holy war, one of complete extermination.

*the Lord of the whole earth*] Comp. Zech. vi. 5; Ps. xcvii. 5.

14. EXTREME HUMILIATION OF ZION AND OF HER RULER DURING A SIEGE OF THE CITY.

A fresh start parallel to verse 9 (or verse 11), while v. 1 is parallel to iv. 8. The prophet pictures the extreme humiliation which will be meted out to Zion before her turn for the better may come.

*shalt thou cut thyself*] This is the most plausible rendering (Graetz); the paronomasia is one of sound, which it is impossible to bring out in the translation. Cutting oneself, i. e. making incisions in the body, was a mourning rite (Jer. xvi. 6), which, though prohibited in the Torah (Deut. xiv. 1), was nevertheless practised (Jer. xli. 5). The city will be in mourning.

CHAP. V. 1—5. *The advent of the Messiah and the inauguration of permanent peace for Israel.*

1 But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrath,
Which art little to be among the thousands of Judah,
Out of thee shall one come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel;
Whose goings forth are from of old, from ancient days.

*O daughter of troops*] The meaning is obscure. Perhaps the text is in disorder.

*They have laid siege*, &c.] The people's lamentation.

*they smite .... upon the cheek*] Comp. I Kings xxii. 24; Isa. i. 6; Job xvi. 10. To such humiliation will the city and its ruler be subjected. But there is a glorious restoration to come, and a more glorious ruler, who shall exercise dominion over the nations, who now so shamefully humiliate Israel.

*the judge*] i. e. the ruler. Comp. I Sam. viii, 20.

## CHAPTER V.

1—5. THE ADVENT OF THE MESSIAH AND THE INAUGURATION OF PERMANENT PEACE FOR ISRAEL

1. *Beth-lehem Ephrath*] There were two cities named Beth-lehem, and each had the additional name of Ephrath; the one was situated in Benjamin, between Beth-el and Ramah, and was the site of the tomb of Rachel (Gen. xxxv. 16 ff.; I Sam. x. 2; Jer. xxxi. 15); the other in Judah (Ruth iv. 11; I Sam. xvii. 12). Here, of course, the latter is meant. A third Beth-lehem, in Galilee, is mentioned, Joshua xix. 15 (see Neubauer, *La géographie du Talmud*, p. 188 ff.).

*thousands*] i. e. *families*, or clans. Though the least in Judah, it is really the greatest.

*ruler in Israel*] i. e. the Messiah (Targum), a second and greater David (Hosea iii. 5; Ezek. xxxiv. 23 f.; xxxvii. 24). The stress is upon the Davidic descent of the Messiah; for David was a Beth-lehemite.

*from ancient days*] A relative term denoting the more or less distant past. In our passage the time of the rise of the Davidic dynasty is meant. The English

(Therefore will He give them up, 2
Until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth:
Then the residue of his brethren shall return with
the children of Israel.)
And he shall stand, and shall feed *his flock* in the 3
strength of the Lord,
In the majesty of the name of the Lord his God:
And they shall dwell *in safety*, for then shall he be
great unto the ends of the earth.
And this shall be peace: 4

Version: *from everlasting*, implying the doctrine of the pre-existence of the Messiah. So the Targum: *whose name was uttered in the beginning*. See Additional Note IV.

2. *Therefore*] The verse is parenthetical, the point of time being that of iv. 10, or iv. 14.

*give them up*] i. e. deliver them to their enemies.

*until the time*, &c.] Until that great child (the ruler of Davidic stock) has been born. Comp. Isa. vii. 14.

*the residue of his brethren*] i. e. the tribe of Judah (Rashi, Kimhi).

*shall return*] To the Holy Land.

*with*] So Kimhi.

*the children of Israel*] i. e. the ten tribes (Rashi, Kimhi). There will be a return of All-Israel (comp. Hosea ii. 2; Isa. xi. 13).

3. *feed* his flock] The object is added for the sake of the English (comp. the Greek Version).

*in the strength*, &c.] He shall be endowed by the Lord with the power and authority belonging to the ideal ruler and making for a reign of righteousness and peace (comp. Isa. xi. 2 ff.).

*and they shall dwell* in safety] The last two words are easily supplied from the context (Ibn Ezra, Kimhi). Less correctly: *and they shall return* (Syriac Version, Targum, Vulgate, Rashi, Joseph Kara). Subject: the people, Israel and Judah.

*for then*] i. e. at the time when the Messianic kingdom will be established.

4. *And this shall be peace*] This peace ensuing upon the advent of the Messiah shall be peace

When the Assyrian shall come into our land,
And when he shall tread in our palaces,
Then shall we raise against him seven shepherds,
And eight princes among men.
5 And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword,

in all truth, real and abiding, consisting, as the following illustration shows, in the repulsion of hostile attacks (so Rashi; comp. the Greek Version and Targum). The Hebrew, though with less probability, admits of being rendered: *and this* man *shall be* our *peace* (Vulgate, Kimhi), i. e. he shall be the guarantee of our peace (by repelling the attacks of our enemies). (According to the Talmud [Shabbat 10 *b*], God's name is Peace.) The passage Zech. ix. 10 is not quite analogous, inasmuch as there, in the spirit of Micah iv. 1 ff., the Messianic peace implies the cessation of warfare. On the other hand, Isa. ix. 5 f. is quite apposite with its reference to a period of "peace without end" (with which is coupled a reign of "justice and righteousness," hence of internal, civic peace) ushered in by a king-liberator of warlike character, who is to break down the yoke of his people's oppressors, making away with "every boot that treads down noisily, and every cloak that is rolled in blood." The present passage is but the prelude to iv. 1 ff.; first peace to Israel, through warfare if necessary; then peace to human kind, when war shall be no more.

*the Assyrian*] The enemy threatening the Messianic kingdom is identified with the dominant power in the times of the prophet.

*in our palaces*] The Greek Version: *in our land* (=בארמתנו?).

*raise against him*] i. e. as adversaries, to be leaders in combating the intruding foe. Perhaps we should render: *set by his side*, i. e. by the side of the Messiah, as his aids and lieutenants.

*seven . . . eight*] A goodly number (Ibn Ezra, Kimhi; comp. Eccles. xi. 2, and elsewhere). Possibly, however, the numbers are to be taken as traditional, and the reference is here to the "Companions of the Messiah." See Additional Note V.

*among men*] The sense is obscure.

5. *waste*] The Hebrew properly

And the land of Nimrod with the naked sword:
And he shall deliver us from the Assyrian, when he
cometh into our land,
And when he treadeth within our border.

6—8. *The greatness of the restored community.*

*And the remnant of Jacob, in the midst of many 6
peoples, shall be
As dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass,
That are not looked for from man,
Nor awaited at the hands of the sons of Adam.

*Haftarah* (Prophetic Lesson) corresponding to the Lesson from the Torah, *Balak* (Num. xxii. 2—xxv. 9).

means: *feed on, eat up* (said of grazing cattle), and the verb is intended as a play on *shepherds* in the preceding verse.

*the land of Nimrod*] A poetic appellation of Assyria for the sake of parallelism. According to Gen. x. 8 ff., Nimrod was the founder of Babylonian civilization. Assyria is clearly indicated there as an offshoot (colony) from Babylonia. In Nimrod, Babylonia and Assyria may be said to be united.

*with the naked sword*] So Aquila, an anonymous Greek version ("Quinta"), Vulgate, Ibn Ezra, Kimhi. Perhaps a slight change of the text (בפתיחה for בפתחיה) is necessary.

*and he shall deliver us*] The object is supplied from the context. Subject: the Messiah (Kimhi), or read: *they* (ורעו).

*when he cometh . . . when he treadeth*] Implying: so that he may not come nor tread.

6—8. THE GREATNESS OF THE RESTORED COMMUNITY.

6. *And the remnant of Jacob,* &c.] So with the accents.

*as dew*] The Biblical "dew" is the night-mist of the summer months in Palestine, which represents the condensed moisture brought by westerly winds from the Mediterranean and cooled by the night air. As rain does not fall from the beginning of May to

7 And the remnant of Jacob, among the nations, in the
midst of many peoples, shall be
As a lion among the beasts of the forest,
As a young lion among the flocks of sheep:
Who, if he go through, treadeth down and teareth in pieces,
And there is none to deliver.
8 Let Thy hand be lifted up above Thine adversaries,
And let all Thine enemies be cut off.

9—14. *The community freed from the reprehensible features of the present order of things and unmolested by enemies.*

9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord,

the latter part of October, the night-mist supplies to the parched vegetation moisture abundant enough to sustain the summer crops (see article *Dew* in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*). The point of comparison is set forth in the end of the verse. Just as the dew and the rain are blessings from the Lord which no human effort can bring about, so the restored community, as it shall stand forth among the nations, will be the direct result of the divine salvation coming spontaneously and when least expected (Menahem bar Helbo). The dew is elsewhere (Isa. xxvi. 19) an emblem of resurrection; comp. the Targumic phrase: "the dew of resurrection" (טלין דתחיותא, Ps. lxviii. 10; comp. Hagigah 12*b*).

*from the Lord*] Explained in the second half of the verse.

7. The community thus constituted will be an object of fear.

*among the nations*] The words are inserted by the Greek Version also in verse 6.

8. The uplifted hand, to which is opposed the slack hand, is the symbol of powerful activity. The enemies of Israel are the enemies of the Lord. As the text reads, we have here a prayer, a sigh of the community in exile.

9—14. THE COMMUNITY FREED FROM THE REPREHENSIBLE FEATURES OF THE PRESENT ORDER OF THINGS AND UNMOLESTED BY ENEMIES.

9. *in that day*] According to the context, in the Messianic period, the aim of the prophet

That I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee,
And will destroy thy chariots:
And I will cut off the cities of thy land, 10
And will throw down all thy strongholds:
And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thy hand; 11
And thou shalt have no *more* soothsayers:
And I will cut off thy graven images and thy pillars 12
out of the midst of thee;
And thou shalt no more worship the work of thy hands.

being not so much to describe the latter as, by contrast, to castigate the reprehensible practices in vogue in his own day. Thus a transition is effected to the subject-matter of the following sections.

*thy horses . . . thy chariots*] See note on i. 13.

10. *the cities*] Fortified cities are meant.

11. *witchcrafts out of thy hand*] Apparently such magic arts are alluded to as were manipulated by the hand.

*soothsayers*] Probably those who divine by observing the clouds (Hebrew *meonenim*; for rabbinic explanations see Sanhedrin 65*a*).

12. *pillars*] The word (*massebah*) occurs in Phœnician and Palmyrene, and, as may be gathered from the objects on which it is inscribed, designates a commemorative obelisk erected over a tomb (hence in late Hebrew: a tombstone in general), or in honor of a deity. The massebah, though employed freely by the patriarchs (Gen. xxviii. 22; xxxi. 45, 51 f.; comp. also Exod. xxiv. 4; Isa. xix. 19; Hosea iii. 4; in the last two passages, however, an accommodation to the custom of the Egyptians and the idolatrous Israelites), is usually characterized as a heathen symbol of the Canaanites, and proscribed (Exod. xxiii. 24, and elsewhere).

*worship the work of thy hands*] The images alone were properly an object of worship; nevertheless, the massebot were likewise associated with the impure worship.

13 And I will pluck up thine Asherim out of the midst
of thee:
And I will destroy thine enemies.
14 And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon
the nations,
Because they hearkened not.

CHAP. VI. 1—8. *A controversy between the Lord and Israel. The false and the true service of the Lord.*

1 Hear ye now what the Lord is saying:
'Arise, contend thou before the mountains,
And let the hills hear thy voice.'

13. *Asherim*] Singular: *Asherah*, a post or pole, planted in the ground beside an altar and venerated as a sacred symbol. The *Asherah* is prohibited in the Torah (Deut. xvi. 21 f.); the destruction of Canaanite *Asherim* is likewise enjoined (Exod. xxxiv. 13, and elsewhere). Nevertheless the Canaanite custom was imitated by the unspiritual Israelites. A famous *Asherah* in Samaria is alluded to II Kings xiii. 6 (comp. I Kings xvi. 33). Josiah destroyed the *Asherah* erected by Manasseh in the Temple (II Kings xxiii. 6 f.; xxii. 7).

*thine enemies*] So the Masorah, Targum, Rashi, Ibn Ǧanah, Kimhi.

14. *upon the nations*] The enemies are the nations that are both directly and indirectly a source of danger to Israel. From the nations come the attacks on Israel's security; from them the idolatrous worship and the military ambitions. The nations must be destroyed, so that Israel, living in safety and freed from the contagion, may devote itself to that life which is truly consonant with its genius, and become the holy nation the Lord has destined it to be.

*because they hearkened not*] In the language of the Midrash (Sifre on Deut. xxxiii. 2), because they refused to receive the Law at the time that Israel did.

Hear, O ye mountains, the Lord's controversy, 2
And ye enduring *rocks*, the foundations of the earth:
For the Lord hath a controversy with His people,
And He will plead with Israel.
O My people, what *harm* have I done unto thee? 3
And wherein have I wearied thee?
Testify against Me.

CHAPTER VI.

**1—8.** A CONTROVERSY BETWEEN THE LORD AND ISRAEL. THE FALSE AND THE TRUE SERVICE OF THE LORD.

**1.** *is saying*] So, correctly, Targum and Vulgate. The prophet bids the people listen to the divine word just at this moment becoming audible to him.

*contend thou before the mountains*] Not *with*, which, though the usual meaning of the Hebrew particle, is clearly impossible here. In the ensuing controversy, the Lord, as it were, keeps in the background, the prophet appearing in His stead and on His behalf as prosecutor.

**2.** The prophet forthwith executes the divine command. The everlasting mountains, as witnesses of the Lord's dealings with Israel in ancient times, are impanelled as a jury. The Midrash takes the mountains as the "fathers" (patriarchs), and the hills as the "mothers" (Exod. rabba ch. xv and xxviii, Rosh ha-shanah 11 *a*, certain manuscripts of the Targum).

*and ye enduring* rocks] The meaning "strong" is assigned to the Hebrew adjective frequently in the ancient versions, also in the Talmud (Sotah 46 *a*; Rosh ha-shanah 11 *a*). Arabic, however, suggests the rendering adopted in the text (comp. Num. xxiv. 21, and elsewhere).

**3.** The argument is entered upon. There is a tone of tenderness throughout. The Lord for the moment plays the defendant. The fault is not on His side; for He has been uniformly kind to Israel. Thus, indirectly, the nation is accused of ingratitude.

*what* harm, &c.] So, correctly, Ibn Ezra and Kimhi.

*And wherein have I wearied thee*] By what excessive demands (comp. Isa. xliii. 23), by what unkept promises (comp.

4 Is it because I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,
And redeemed thee out of the house of bondage,
And sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam?
5 O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab devised,
And what Balaam the son of Beor answered him;
From Shittim unto Gilgal,
That ye may know the righteous acts of the Lord.

Jer. ii. 31) have I subjected thee to too great exertion, or exhausted thy patience, and thus afforded thee a pretext for deserting Me?

4. On the contrary, I bestowed upon thee singular favors. The arraignment gains in force by the ironical query. Comp. Amos ii. 10; Jer. ii. 6; also Hosea xi. 1; xii. 14.

*and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage*] Comp. Deut. vii. 8; xiii. 6, and elsewhere.

*and sent before thee*] The "sending" implies a divine commission; "before thee", guidance in the flight from Egypt and the journeyings from the wilderness as well as spiritual ministry. Moses and Aaron are coupled together as the people's guides, or priests, Ps. lxvii. 21 (20); xcix. 6 (comp. Exod. iii. 14 ff., and elsewhere). After the passage through the Red Sea, Miriam arouses the enthusiasm of the women as Moses does that of the men (Exod. xv. 1, 20). The three are designated as prophets (Num. xii); but the primacy of Moses is emphasized (ibid.). Comp. also Hosea xii. 14; Isa. lxiii. 12, and elsewhere. The Targum paraphrases: *three prophets, Moses to teach the Law, Aaron to atone for the people, and Miriam to instruct the women.*

5. *Balak king of Moab devised*] Comp. Num. xxii. 6.

*Balaam the son of Beor answered him*] Comp. Num. xxiii. 7 ff.; 18 ff.; xxiv. 3 ff.; 15 ff.; Joshua xxiv. 9 f.

*from Shittim unto Gilgal*] There is an apparent difficulty in construing these words. The reference, however, can only be to the crossing of the Jordan and the transition from the camp life in the plains of Moab (comp. Joshua ii. 1) to settled conditions on the other side of the Jordan (ibid.,

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, 6
And bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings,
With calves of a year old?

x. 9–12; comp. Exod. xvi. 35). So, correctly, the Targum. The possession of the Holy Land is the climax to the divine favors begun with the exodus (comp. Amos ii. 10; Jer. ii. 7).

*the righteous acts*] The Hebrew *sedakah* means more than "righteousness" in the sense of justice, i. e. of giving to every man that which is his due by law; it includes equity and humane conduct, kindness. As an attribute of the Lord, it is coupled with *hesed*, "lovingkindness" (Ps. xxxvi. 11 [10]; ciii. 17); His righteous acts are those which work blessings (Ps. xxiv. 5) and salvation (Isa. xlv. 8, and elsewhere). Here (as in I Sam. xii. 7) the divine favors to Israel in the course of the nation's history, and especially in the beginning thereof, are meant.

**6**. The reply of the penitent people, which only serves to bring out their utter lack of understanding as to the right kind of service demanded by the Lord. The willingness of the people to repay the Lord's favors is pathetic, exactly as the kind of service they offer in their indolent, cringing, cowardly spirit is insulting to the Deity. The arraignment thus really continues, and the people are condemned out of their own mouth.

*come before*] i. e. meet, as one meets, or receives, a friend, or guest, with gifts, with bread and water (Isa. xxi. 14; Deut. xxiii. 5). Hence *come before* = make an offering to (Vulgate).

*bow myself*] i. e. bend my head (Isa. lviii. 5) in humble submission and worship.

*before God on high*] i. e. in heaven. The great and lofty God who inhabits the height of heaven (comp. Isa. xxxiii. 5) is the Holy God (ibid., lvii. 15), transcendent in character, yet by no means unapproachable and distant.

*burnt-offerings*] i. e. offerings in which the victim is totally consumed by fire upon the altar, no portion of the flesh being used for food, distinguished from the other sacrificial variety called "sacrifice" (*zebah*) or "peace-offering" (*shelem, shelamim*), of which, after

7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
*Or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

the internal organs together with the fat have been consumed on the altar, the flesh is eaten by the sacrificer and his invited guests, barring certain portions, which are given to the priest as his due (comp. Lev. i; iii; vi. 1–6; vii. 11–34). The Torah speaks also of "sin-offerings" (of which the "guilt-offering" is a sub-variety), of which the flesh is either eaten by the priest, or burnt outside the camp (comp. Lev. iv; v; vi. 17–vii. 6). The burnt and sin-offerings are holy in the first degree, while the peace-offerings are holy only in the second degree. The burnt-offering is clearly typical of the idea of sacrifice as a gift to the Deity; it is wholly accepted by Him, while in the case of the other sacrifices He cedes of His own "food" (ibid., xxi. 6, and elsewhere) to the priest, or to the sacrificer, entertaining them, as it were, at His own "table" (Mal. i. 7; comp. Lev. rabba, ch. xxii). While in the early period, antedating even the beginnings of the national life of Israel, crude notions were entertained with reference to the needs of the Deity, it is certain that, though the phrases persisted to a late date, their grosser connotations had been eliminated from the consciousness of the people, and the sacrifices had come to be looked upon merely as symbolic of the readiness of the worshipper to give up his very best as an expression of his dependence on the Deity. See Additional Note VI.

*with calves of a year old*] Comp. Lev. i. 3, 5.

**7.** Nor is it a question of quantity.

*rams*] Poetic specification (comp. I Sam. xv. 22).

*oil*] Oil was used, as far as we know, principally in connection with the "meal-offering" (Lev. ii; comp. ibid., xiv. 10 ff.; Ezek. xlv. 14). In the Mishnah (Zebahim x. 8) a votive or freewill-offering of oil (without flour) is recognized.

*my first-born . . . the fruit of my body*] The Torah prescribes that all male first-born, whether of man or beast, belong to the Lord (Exod. xiii. 2, and elsewhere), and must be dedicated, or offered

It hath been declared unto thee, O man, what is good; 8
And what doth the Lord require of thee,

to Him (Exod. xiii. 2, 12), i. e. the offerable animals as sacrifices (ibid., 15), while certain unclean animals and the human first-born are to be redeemed, the former by an offerable animal, and the latter by the payment of money to the priest (ibid., 13, 15; see Mekilta on verse 13). On the other hand, the sacrifice of children "unto Moloch" is forbidden as a profanation of the name of the Lord under the penalty of death (Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2–5; comp. Deut. xviii. 10). Moreover, it is included among the abominable practices of the Canaanites which the Israelites are admonished to shun (Deut. xii. 31). See Additional Note VII.

*for my transgression . . . for the sin of my soul*] The principal function of the sacrificial cult is piacular. The gift is to symbolize the devotion of the repentant sinner, who, estranged from God by his sin, would restore himself to divine favor and re-establish relations with the Deity. As a symbol of repentance sacrifice is, of course, by no means reprehensible; from this point of view sacrifice as an institution is ordained in the Torah. See Additional Note VI.

8. The prophet replies.

*It hath been declared unto thee*] The logical subject is indefinite (Greek Version, Aquila, Theodotion, Targum). It is characteristic of the Hebrew idiom to suppress the subject when indefinite; sometimes, with the same force, the subject is expressed according to the well-known pattern: *when he who hears, hears.* (II Sam. xvii. 9) = when it is heard. So here, in a fuller manner, it might have been said: *He who hath declared*, or *the declarer, hath declared unto thee*, i. e. those charged with declaring (revealing, making known) the word of God, the prophets, have made known to thee. Micah, it may be for reasons of modesty, refrains from pronouncing the following teaching in his own name; but, in truth, with Amos and Hosea before him, not to mention Moses, he could scarcely claim originality for himself.

*O man*] The individual Jew, though a member of the holy nation, is a man among men,

But to execute justice, and to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with thy God? *

* Here ends the Lesson.

having duties to his fellow-men of whatever nationality, and recognizing the supra-national foundations of morality. In introducing the laws prohibiting incest and other gross immoralities, among them also the law forbidding child sacrifice, the Lawgiver, though clearly declaring that such immoralities are practised both by the Egyptians and Canaanites, nevertheless designates those laws as ordinances "by which, if a *man* do them, he shall live" (Lev. xviii 5). The rabbis have certainly grasped the full meaning of this word when they say by way of explicit comment: "It is not written, *A priest, a Levite*, or *an Israelite*, but *a man*; hence, even a Gentile who keeps the Torah is as worthy as the high priest. So it is also written, 'And this is the law of *man*' (II Sam. vii. 19); 'Open ye the gates, that the *righteous Gentile* (גוי) who keepeth truth may enter in' (Isa. xxvi. 2); 'This is the gate of the Lord: the *righteous* shall enter into it' (Ps. cxviii. 20); 'Rejoice in the Lord, O ye *righteous*' (Ps. xxxiii. 1); 'Do good, O Lord, unto those who are *good*' (Ps. cxxv. 4)" (Sifra on Lev. xviii. 5; Baba kamma 38*a*; Sanhedrin 59*a*; 77*a*).

*and to love kindness*] Hebrew: *ḥesed*, a term signifying the doing of such favors as are not exactly a matter of justice, and certainly not of legal requirement; it is more comprehensive than, and therefore inclusive of, "mercy," i. e. kindness extended to the lowly, needy, and miserable. In the phraseology of the rabbis, "the doing of kindnesses (גמילות חסדים)" is a wide term designating all charitable acts to persons not necessarily dependent, especially such as go with personal service (Sukkah 49*b*). According to Rabbi Eleazar, almsgiving becomes a complete act of charity only if coupled with a deed of kindness (ibid.). The same teacher maintains that, while almsgiving transcends in value all sacrifices, deeds of kindness are greater than almsgiving (ibid.)

*and to walk humbly with thy God*] Walking with God means living in intimacy and close fellow-

9—16. *Denunciation of the injustice of the rich and ruling classes.*

Hark! the Lord crieth unto the city, 9
(And *the man of* wisdom will see Thy name:)
Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

ship with God and in a manner pleasing to Him (comp. Gen. v. 22, and elsewhere). Humbly = modestly, retiringly, unobtrusively, unostentatiously, not with the devotion which must express itself in costly and public sacrificial gifts (or acts of charity), but with inward devotion and noiseless acts of love. Humility is the keynote of Jewish ethical teachings. The Jewish saint is pre-eminently humble (Num. xii. 3; Berakot 6*b*). According to Rabbi Phinehas ben Jair, Torah leads to caution; caution leads to forethought; forethought leads to sinlessness; sinlessness leads to asceticism; asceticism leads to purity; purity leads to holiness; holiness leads to humility; humility leads to the fear of sin; fear of sin leads to piety; piety leads to the holy spirit; the holy spirit paves the way for the resurrection (Abodah zarah 20*b*). The rabbis add that piety, leading as it does to the holy spirit, is the highest degree of all; while Rabbi Joshua ben Levi assigns the highest place to humility (ibid.). Modesty, says the Midrash (Pesikta rabbeti, ed. Friedmann, p. 185*b*), is most pleasing to God. It is especially a virtue of the Jewish woman (Shabbat 140*b*; Num. rabba, ch. i), but also of the Jewish man (ibid., 53*b*; Menahot 43*a*).

9—16. DENUNCIATION OF THE INJUSTICE OF THE RICH AND RULING CLASSES. See Additional Note II.

9. *Hark*! &c.] The prophet is speaking. The city is apparently Jerusalem; the Lord crieth unto her, i. e. declares to her her guilt and the consequences thereof.

*and* the man of *wisdom*, &c.] So Ibn Ezra and Kimhi. But the words "the man of" are not in the Hebrew, and their omission does not appear justified by other analogies. Nor does the rendering "*and Thy name shall see that which is*," yield a satisfactory sense. Others translate: *it is*

10 Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house
of the wicked,
And the scant measure that is abominable?
11 Shall I be pure with wicked balances,
And with a bag of deceitful weights?

*wisdom to look for Thy name*, a parenthetical remark urging the importance of giving heed to the following warning and threat (Reuss); or (on the basis of the ancient versions): *it is salvation* (salutary) *to fear Thy name*, equally a side-remark showing how, when the Lord's voice of rebuke is heard, those who, like the prophet, fear God's name, need not feel alarmed, while the wicked must tremble (Ewald). The text remains obscure.

*hear ye the rod*, &c.] So Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Kimhi. The rod is the rod of punishment; thus Assyria is designated as the rod of the Lord's anger in Isa. x. 5. "And who hath appointed it" — the pronoun with emphasis; of course, the Lord is meant. The Lord appoints the rod, as He is said to appoint the sword (Jer. xlvii. 7). Ewald (comp. Greek Version, Vulgate, Targum, Menahem bar Ḥelbo): *Hear, O tribe, and whoso assembleth it* (the king).

10. *Are there yet*, &c.] So Kimhi (comp. Targum). The arraignment proceeds in the form of interrogation. *Yet* = all this time, in spite of repeated warnings. Other renderings have been proposed, which, however, are not convincing.

*and the scant*] Hebrew: *lean*. Comp. Amos viii. 5; Deut. xxv. 13 ff.

*measure*] Hebrew: *ephah*, a grain measure = about 40 litres.

*abominable*] Comp. Deut. xxv. 16.

11. *Shall I be pure*] The impersonal "I" in the sense of "one." The Greek Version seems to have read the third person, equally in an impersonal sense. *Pure* = blameless.

*with wicked balances*] Comp. Lev. xix. 36; Deut. xxv. 13. *Wicked* = fraudulent.

*and with a bag*] Comp. Deut. xxv. 13; Prov. xvi. 11. It was customary to carry small weights in a bag about the body.

For the rich men thereof are full of violence, 12
And the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies,
And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.
Therefore I also do smite thee with a grievous wound; 13
I do make thee desolate because of thy sins.
Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; 14
And thy humiliation shall be in the midst of thee:
And thou shalt remove, but shalt not carry away safe;
And that which thou carriest away will I give up to the sword.

12. *For*, &c.] In Hebrew: *She* (= the city; comp. verse 9), *whose rich men.*

*are full of violence*] i. e. full of the spirit of violence. And so they fill their houses with the proceeds of their violence (comp. verse 10 and Amos iii. 10; see also note on iii. 10).

*have spoken lies*] i. e. are untruthful.

*deceitful*] So, correctly, Ibn Ğanah and Kimhi.

13. *Therefore I also*] In accordance with thy deeds and in just retribution.

*do smite thee*] The prophet is addressing an individual among the rich as a typical example. His fate, of course, will be the fate of them all.

14. *Thou shalt eat*, &c.] Comp. Lev. xxvi. 26.

*and thy humiliation shall be in the midst of thee*] So Vulgate, Ibn Ğanah, Ibn Ezra, Kimhi. The Hebrew word rendered "humiliation" occurs nowhere else. The Syriac Version and the Targum think of *dysentery* (comp. Sifre on Deut. xi. 12). The other versions seem to have had readings more or less at variance with the received text. Thus certain manuscripts of the Greek Version render: *I will cast thee out* (ואסחך), while others, in agreement with Theodotion, have: *it shall become dark* (ויחשך); Symmachus: *it shall destroy thee* (וישחתך); Aquila: *I will plant thee* (ואשתלך). None of these readings is satisfactory, nor is the rendering "hunger" (Ewald) acceptable. Aquila's text, however, suggests a plausible emendation

15 Thou shalt sow, but shalt not reap:
Thou shalt tread the olives, but shalt not anoint thee with oil;
And the vintage, but shalt not drink the wine.
16 For the statutes of Omri are kept,
And all the works of the house of Ahab,
And ye walk in their counsels:
That I may make thee an astonishment,
And the inhabitants thereof a hissing;
And ye shall bear the reproach of My people.

which is given in the following note.

*and thou shalt remove, but shalt not carry away safe; and that which thou carriest away*] sc. of thy belongings (in particular women and children). So Ewald (comp. Aquila and certain manuscripts of the Greek Version, hence the Vulgate). Ibn Ǧanah (followed by Ibn Ezra and Ḳimḥi) renders: *and she* (= thy wife) *shall conceive, but shall not bear* (comp. Deut. xxviii. 18, and for the verb Job xxi. 10); *and whomsoever she beareth.* The sense is excellent, and it may be permissible to suggest for the two preceding words the emended reading: *and thy wife in her body* (ואשתך בקרבה).

15. *Thou shalt sow*, &c.] Comp. Amos v. 11.

*anoint thee with oil*] The warm climate of Palestine requires application of fat to the skin. It was customary to oil the body after a bath (II Sam. xii. 20, and elsewhere), and also to pour oil upon the head (Ps. cxli. 5, and elsewhere). The custom is frequently alluded to in the Mishnah (e. g. Yoma viii. 1).

*vintage*] The Hebrew word properly means "must" (according to Ḳimḥi metonymically for "grapes").

16. *For the statutes of Omri are kept*] Or, with a slight change of the text (ותשמרו), *for ye keep*, &c. The plural and the singular interchange, the person addressed in the preceding verses being typical of the whole class of grandees. "The statutes of Omri" — the phrase immediately suggests the

CHAP. VII. 1—6. *The prophet laments the complete disruption of the moral order.*

Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the 1
summer fruits,
As when they glean the grapes of the vintage:
There is no cluster to eat;
Nor first-ripe fig which my soul desireth.

contrast: the Lord's statutes are not kept. Omri was the father of Ahab (I Kings xvi. 28). The author of the Book of Kings describes him as a king more wicked than any of his predecessors (ibid., 25).

*and all the works of the house of Ahab*] The "works" of the house of Ahab, and primarily of Ahab, were the introduction of the Baal and Asherah cults (ibid., 31 f.), the persecution and slaughter of the prophets of the Lord (ibid., xxii. 27; xviii. 4), and rapacity exemplified by the robbery and judicial murder of Naboth (ibid., xxi). From Israel the idolatrous worship passed on to Judah (II Kings viii. 27; comp. also ibid., xvi. 3).

*that I may*, &c.] The consequence is frequently presented by the Scriptural writers ironically as design.

*thee*] i. e. the Judæan grandee. It is quite likely that the king is addressed throughout the last verses.

*an astonishment*] i. e. an object of astonishment.

*thereof*] i. e. of Jerusalem.

*a hissing*] The two nouns are coupled together frequently (comp. Jer. xviii. 16, and elsewhere.

*and ye shall bear*, &c.] As leaders of the people, the reproach to which they shall be subjected will be yours. Our text was read by Targum and Vulgate.

## CHAPTER VII.

1—6. THE PROPHET LAMENTS THE COMPLETE DISRUPTION OF THE MORAL ORDER.

1. The prophet speaks in the name of the community.

*I am*] as stripped of good men as an orchard or vineyard after the fruit has been gathered in and only gleanings are left.

*as when they have gathered*, &c.] And a few of the worst are

2 The godly man is perished out of the earth,
And the upright among men is no more:
They all lie in wait for blood;
They hunt every man his brother with a net.
3 Their hands are upon that which is evil to do it diligently:
The prince asketh, and the judge *is ready* for a reward;

left in the orchard. Possibly we should render (comp. Targum and Rashi): *as the last of the summer fruits.*

*as when they glean the grapes of the vintage*] Or, *as the grape gleanings of the vintage.*

*there is no cluster to eat*] Only scattered grapes remain. Or the reference is to the quality, as in the following verse.

*nor first-ripe fig*, &c.] The early figs were regarded as a delicacy (comp. Isa. xxviii. 4). At the end of the summer they are, of course, no more. For the figurative sense, comp. Isa. v. 2; Hosea ix. 10. The *soul*, as often, the seat of the appetites.

**2.** *The godly man*] Hebrew: *hasid*, the man who actively practises *hesed*, "kindness," "love," the pious and saintly man. In the Talmud and the post-Talmudic literature the term comes nearest to the English "saint." In Scripture, the emphasis seems to lie on the humanitarian activities of the hasid (comp. Isa. lvii. 1; Ps. xii. 2 [1] ff.).

*perished*] i. e. disappeared.

*out of the earth*] Although the prophet is speaking with a view to his own circle, he may conceivably exaggerate. Moreover, each godly man, as he disappears, may well be said to be gone out of the earth. The earth, the world, is poorer for the loss of him. See the next clause.

*and the upright*, &c.] Uprightness is a human quality: one is upright as a man among men. See note on vi. 8.

*lie in wait for blood*] See note on iii. 10. In Sirach xiii. 19 we read: "Wild asses of the wilderness are food for the lion: so the poor are the prey of the rich."

**3.** *the prince asketh*] Supply: the judge for a bribe.

*and the judge* is ready *for a reward*] From the hands of the rich man.

And the great man, he uttereth the evil desire of his soul:
Thus they weave it together.
The best of them is as a brier,
The most upright is *worse* than a thorn hedge:
The day of thy watchmen, even thy visitation, is come;
Now shall be their perplexity. 4

*and the great man*] i. e. the rich man, the man of influence who corrupts the judge.

*he uttereth the evil desire of his soul*] So the versions unanimously; "evil desire" = wicked thought, plot.

*thus they*] i. e. the three leading classes amongst themselves.

*weave it together*] "It," indefinite neuter object. The rendering of the verb goes back to a Talmudic authority (Rabbi Berechiah in Palestinian Talmud, Ta'anit 65 *b*), and is apparently correct. Weaving = intriguing. Thus the intrigue is accomplished, the plot against the poor.

4. *is as a brier*] i. e. as crooked and as prickly.

*the most upright is* worse *than,* &c.] Possibly we should read: *the most upright of them is as a thorn hedge* (ישרם מסוכה). Comp. II Sam. xxiii. 5 f.

*the day of thy watchmen*] The prophet is a watchman seeing the danger ahead of the people and signalling to them, warning them betimes (comp. Isa. xxi. 6; Ezek. xxxiii. 2 ff., and elsewhere). Others (Targum, Rashi, Kimhi; comp. also the Talmudic passage referred to above) think of the optimistic false prophets; then, "the day of thy watchmen," an ironical phrase, the hopes raised by the words being dashed by the following exposition.

*thy visitation, is come*] The prophetic tense. "Visitation" (from the Latin *visitare*, frequentative of *visere*, "look at attentively") is the Scriptural word for God's providential and retributive activity, both in rewarding and punishing. Here the latter connotation is meant: it is the day of reckoning, the day of judgment.

*now*] = then, at that point in the future.

*shall be*] i. e. come to pass.

*their perplexity*] So the Targum correctly (comp. Isa. xxii. 5; Exod. xiv. 3). The other versions

5 Trust ye not in a friend,
Put ye not confidence in a familiar friend;
Keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.
6 For the son dishonoureth the father,
The daughter riseth up against her mother,
The daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
A man's enemies are the men of his own house.

(except the Vulgate, which incorrectly renders: *devastation*, ruin) and the Talmud (in the passage referred to above) read (or mistranslate): *their weeping*.

**5.** A fresh start. The corruption has gone so far that the most intimate relations of friendship and domestic life are disrupted. Comp. Jer. ix. 3.

*Trust ye*] Impersonal address.

**6.** *the men of his own house*] i. e. his domestic servants (comp. Job xix. 15).

In the Mishnah (Sotah ix. 15) our verse is embodied in a passage descriptive of the conditions which are to obtain in the period immediately preceding the advent of the Messiah (comp. also Matthew x. 35 f.; Luke xii. 53). Similar thoughts and phraseology occur in the apocalyptic writings (Baruch lxx. 3 ff.; IV Ezra v. 9; vi. 24; Enoch ii) and in the Midrashim (Sifre on Deut. xxxii. 36; Pesikta rabbeti, p. 4 *b*: 75 *a*, and elsewhere; Derek eres zutta, ch. x; Cant. rabba, ch. ii; comp. also Sanhedrin 97 *a* ff.). The idea underlying these expectations is that evil must have run its course before the good can come. The hope in the triumphant advent of the Kingdom of God is intensified by the very contemplation of the evil as it exists. When the moral corruption is greatest, salvation is surest; or, as the rabbis say, "out of distress cometh relief" (Midrash Shoher Tob on Ps. xxii; Jer. xxx. 7 is appositely quoted). (Comp. Friedmann's remarks at the end of section xxxvii of the Pesikta, which show penetration into the religious contents of the Jewish eschatology. "The hope," he says, "in the regeneration of the world after a period of greatest physical and moral evil is deeply implanted in the Jewish soul."). This thought dominates the pres-

7—13. *Nevertheless the community hopes for a better future and for triumphant restoration after the exile.*

But as for me, I will look unto the Lord: 7
I will wait for the God of my salvation:
My God will hear me.
Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: 8
Though I be fallen, I shall arise;
Though I sit in darkness, the Lord is a light unto me.
I will bear the indignation of the Lord, 9
Because I have sinned against Him;
Until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me:

ent passage, and is expressed in phraseology which antedates the prophets. Hence the seemingly sudden transition to the hopeful vision, verse 7 ff., where the prophet speaks for the "remnant" (verse 18), the ideal community which, when freed from its own sin, is destined to triumph over the nations now rejoicing in its downfall.

**7—13.** NEVERTHELESS THE COMMUNITY HOPES FOR A BETTER FUTURE AND FOR TRIUMPHANT RESTORATION AFTER THE EXILE.

**7.** The prophet speaks in the name of the "remnant."

**8.** *Rejoice not*, &c.] Assyria, typical of the inimical heathen world, is addressed. Comp. iv. 14.

*in darkness*] Figuratively for great distress and humiliation (comp. Isa. ix. 1; Ps. xxiii. 4; Lam. iii. 6).

*the Lord is a light unto me*] Comp. Ps. xxvii. 1.

**9.** Penitent Israel acknowledges its sins and the justification of its humbled condition. But the day of salvation must dawn.

*I will bear*] i. e. willingly and resignedly; for my punishment is well deserved. Comp. Jer. xiv. 7, 20; Ps. cvi.

*because I have sinned*] It is the formula of confession.

*my cause*] The cause of Israel against the nations is this, that, though chosen by God as the instrument of punishment, they have largely exceeded the limits set to them, and are bent on

He will bring me forth to the light,
*And* I shall behold His righteousness.
10 Then mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her;
Who said unto me, 'Where is the Lord thy God?'
Mine eyes shall gaze upon her;
Now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

annihilating Israel (comp. Isa. x. 5 ff.; xl. 27; xlix. 4; Ezek. xxv. 8 ff.; xxviii. 22 ff.; Ps. xliii. 1). Hence the Seventh Benediction: "Look now upon our affliction, and plead our cause, and redeem us, O Lord, speedily for the sake of Thy name. Blessed be Thou, O Lord, Redeemer of Israel." (Singer's Prayer Book, p. 47.) The immediately preceding Benediction contains the confession of sin.

*bring me forth to the light*] Out of my present darkness (verse 8).

*His righteousness*] The Lord vindicates His own righteous character by taking up the cause of the downtrodden and wronged. Hence the Lord's righteousness is tantamount to His favor and salvation; see note on vi. 5.

**10.** *who said unto me*, &c.] The taunt implies both the humiliation of Israel abandoned by the Lord, and the Lord's impotence. The community appeals to the Lord's honor (comp. II Kings xviii. 34; Joel ii. 17; Ps. lxxix. 10; cxv. 2).

*shall gaze upon her*] i. e. gaze with delight upon her downfall.

*now*] See note on verse 4.

**11–13.** These verses are exceedingly difficult and ambiguous. "The earth" or "the land" (verse 13) may be Palestine or the surrounding countries. The prophet, if the direct speaker, may be threatening Israel, or, on the contrary, the nations. In the former case, he may after all mention the devastation of the Holy Land, not as final, but as preliminary to the gathering of the dispersed (verse 12). It would appear that the person addressed in verses 11 and 12 is the same, yet the vocalization introduces a distinction by making the one in verse 11 a feminine, and the one in verse 12 a masculine person. The translation and interpretation adopted here are therefore tentative.

'The day for building thy walls, even that day, shall be 11
far removed!'
There shall be a day when they shall come unto thee, 12
From Assyria even to the cities of Egypt,
And from Egypt even to the River,
And from sea to sea, and *from* mountain to mountain.

11. The words, it would seem, are spoken by Israel's enemy (verses 8 and 10). The day upon which Israel expects the walls (literally: *fences*) of the holy city to be rebuilt, the day of restoration, shall be far removed, shall never come (so Rashi). Other translations and interpretations: *A day for building thy walls! in that day shall the decree be far removed.* The prophet is then the speaker. The day shall come when thy walls shall be rebuilt, and the irksome subjugation by the nations (= decree) shall cease (Vulgate, Targum; comp. Ibn Ezra). Or: *A day for building thy walls! in that day shall the boundary* (= decree, limit) *be far extended* (Reuss and others). Or: *A day for building thy walls! that day shall be far removed.* That is, the day of Israel's restoration shall come, but it is still distant, and, before it comes, the Holy Land must suffer devastation on account of Israel's sins (Ewald). All the ancient versions presuppose the Masoretic text. The last word, however, may be a faulty repetition of the last two letters of the preceding verb (ירחק חק); or the two words should be read as one (ירחקחק).

12. The rendering adopted in the text comes nearest to the Hebrew. The Hebrew, however, says: HE *shall come unto thee.* "Egypt" for *Maṣor* in agreement with commentators quoted by Kimḥi and most moderns (comp. Isa. xix. 6, and elsewhere). The Vulgate and Targum (comp. Kimḥi) take the word as a common noun: "fortified cities," "fortress" (Aquila, Theodotion, Targum [for the second]: "besieged cities," or "siege"). According to the Targum and most moderns Israel is addressed by the prophet, who predicts for that glorious day the gathering of the dispersed from all parts of the world (comp. Deut. xxx. 3 f., and elsewhere). To this interpretation it may be objected, in the first place, that the

13 And the land shall be desolate for them that dwell therein,
Because of the fruit of their doings.

14—20. *The prophet's concluding word. A prayer on behalf of Israel.*

14 Feed Thy people with Thy rod, the flock of Thy heritage,

Hebrew (attested by Aquila, Vulgate, and Syriac Version) reads: HE *shall come*, and not: THEY *shall come* (the Hebrew, it is true, may be taken as an impersonal construction; see note on vi. 8); secondly, that, after the return of the dispersed, verse 13 with its reference to a "desolate land" yields no satisfactory sense, whether the countries containing exiled Jews, or Palestine, be meant by the "land"; thirdly, that the phraseology of the present verse (*from Assyria even to the cities of Egypt*, or, according to a plausible emendation—ועדי for יערי—, *from Assyria even to Egypt*) points rather to an area *to* which the subject implied in the Hebrew verb is to go, and not *from* which it is to come. It is therefore possible that we have here the retort to the taunt of Israel's enemy: *There shall be a day when he*, i. e. the enemy, *shall come*, laying waste the whole stretch of the country *from Assyria even to Egypt, and from Egypt even to the River* (=Euphrates; Gen. xxxi. 21, and elsewhere), *and from sea to sea* (from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf), *and from mountain to mountain* (from the Syro-Arabian plateau to the Iranian and Armenian highlands). Out of the desolation of Western Asia (or of the world; see Midrash Shoher Tob on Ps. l. 2) shall arise the Messianic Kingdom (and a regenerated world). It is true, *against thee* would suit the interpretation adopted here better than *unto thee*. Perhaps the Hebrew should be emended to read *thy enemy* (ועדיך for ועדיך).

**13**. *And the land*, &c.] See note on the preceding verse. "Notwithstanding," "yet" (English Versions), makeshifts not warranted by the Hebrew idiom.

*for them*, &c.] So that they shall not dwell therein. It shall be uninhabited.

**14—20**. THE PROPHET'S CONCLUDING WORD. A PRAYER ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL.

The prophets are not merely

That dwell solitarily, *as* a forest in the midst of the fruitful field:
Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.
'As in the days of thy coming forth out of the land of 15
Egypt,
Will I show unto him marvellous things.'

castigators of their people's sins; they often, and always in the end, intercede for them. Comp. Jer. xviii. 20.

14. *Feed*] i. e. tend, as a shepherd (comp. Gen. xlix. 24, and elsewhere).

*with Thy rod*] Comp. Ps. xxiii. 1 ff.

*the flock of Thy heritage*] Israel is called the "heritage" (= portion) of the Lord (Deut. iv. 20, and elsewhere) as His elect people. As here, "people" (or "nation") and "heritage" are frequently conjoined (Isa. xix. 25, and elsewhere). Equally the Holy Land and the Temple are called the Lord's heritage (I Sam. xxvi. 19, and elsewhere; Exod. xv. 17, and elsewhere). The designation of Israel as the Lord's flock is quite frequent (Jer. xiii. 20, and elsewhere).

*that dwell solitarily*] i. e. in seclusion and inaccessible to foes (comp. Judges xviii. 7), hence securely (comp. Deut. xxxiii. 28).

as *a forest in the midst of the fruitful field*] i. e. as inaccessible as a forest, &c. (Ibn Ezra). Perhaps we should read: *let them feed* (ירעו for יער) *in the midst of the fruitful field* (= Western Palestine).

*Bashan and Gilead*] On the east of the Jordan, occupied in "the days of old" by Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh (Num. xxxii).

15. The Lord's reply. The Masoretic text is supported by all the ancient versions. The marvellous things are the miracles incident to the deliverance from Egypt (Exod. iii. 20, and elsewhere), indeed, the deliverance itself as a wonderful act of divine power and intercession (comp. Jer. xxi. 2; Sirach xxxv. 6). See Additional Note VIII.

16 ff. The prophet again is speaking.

16 The nations shall see and be put to shame for all their might:
They shall lay their hand upon their mouth,
Their ears shall be deaf.
17 They shall lick the dust like a serpent;
Like crawling things of the earth they shall come trembling out of their close places:
They shall come with fear unto the Lord our God,
And shall be afraid because of Thee.
18 Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth the iniquity,
And passeth by the transgression, of the remnant of His heritage?

**16.** *shall see*] sc. the glory of Israel.

*for all their might*] In spite of all the brute force in which they trusted, and which shall in no wise avail them.

*lay their hand upon their mouth*] i. e. be speechless as a result of their discomfiture.

*their ears shall be deaf*] i. e. stupefied with the magnitude of the catastrophe which has overwhelmed them.

**17.** *They shall lick*, &c.] The serpent, moving as it does with its mouth upon the ground, may readily be supposed to swallow more dust than other animals (see the commentaries on Gen. iii. 14). Licking the dust of another person's feet means humble subjection (Targum, Ibn Ezra; comp. Isa. xlix. 23).

*crawling things of the earth*] i. e. reptiles crawling into the earth to hide.

*out of their close places*] i. e. their fastnesses (Kimhi; comp. Ps. xviii. 46. 45), which are likened here to the holes of reptiles.

*come with fear unto the Lord*] i. e. submit to Him in fear (comp. Hosea iii. 5).

**18** ff. The prophet prays in the name of the "remnant."

**18.** *Who is a God*, &c.] Comp. Exod. xv. 11, and elsewhere.

*that pardoneth the iniquity*] Comp. ibid., xxxii. 6 ff.

*of the remnant of His heritage*] See note on iv. 7.

He retaineth not His anger for ever,
Because He delighteth in lovingkindness.
He will again have compassion upon us; 19
He will subdue our iniquities:
And Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.
Thou wilt show *thy* faithfulness to Jacob, *and thy* loving- 20
kindness to Abraham,

*He retaineth not His anger for ever*] Comp. Exod. xxxii. 6.

*because He delighteth in lovingkindness*] Comp. Ezek. xviii. 23; Ps. cxxx. In our Book of Prayer (Closing Prayer of the Day of Atonement): *For Thou delightest not in the destruction of the world, but art a God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, long-suffering, plentiful in lovingkindness, and abundant in doing good* (Singer's Prayer Book, p. 268).

**19.** *He will again have compassion upon us*] Comp. Hosea xiv. 5 ff.

*He will subdue our iniquities*] Thus they shall have no power over us (Ibn Ezra). Others render: *suppress* (Kimhi), or: *tread under foot*, i. e. destroy.

*Thou wilt cast*] Hence the custom on the afternoon of the New Year to gather beside a river (near which the synagogues in ancient times were usually situated; see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, Second Division, II, p. 69 f.) and to pray for forgiveness of sins while reciting our passage (*Tashlik*, the Hebrew for *Thou wilt cast*; see Singer's Prayer Book, p. 254). The custom is first mentioned by Jacob Mölin (died in Worms in 1427).

*their*] The Greek Version: *our*.

*into the depths of the sea*] Whence they may not come up again.

**20.** *Thou wilt show*, &c.] "Faithfulness" and "mercy" are frequently associated as attributes of the Lord indicating His firmness, reliableness, and kindness in His dealings with men (comp. Gen. xxiv. 27, and elsewhere). The Lord is a God of truth (= fidelity) (Ps. xxxi. 6 [5]), as He is abundant in lovingkindness (Num. xiv. 18, and elsewhere). His faithfulness and lovingkindness endure for ever (Ps. cxvii. 2, and elsewhere). Jacob and

Which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

Abraham = the seed of Jacob and Abraham.

*which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers*] Gen. xxii. 16; xxviii. 13 f. Comp. Ps. cv. 8–11, 42.

The last three verses are joined to the Book of Jonah in the Lesson (Haftarah) on the afternoon of the Day of Atonement.

# ADDITIONAL NOTES

## I

## On i. 5

### THE HIGH PLACES

Hebrew: *bamot,* singular: *bamah.* The Torah (Num. xxxiii. 52) commands, along with the extermination of the Canaanite population upon the Israelitish occupation of Palestine, the destruction of their *bamot,* or, in the language of Deuteronomy (xii. 2), "all the places wherein they served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every leafy tree," together with their appurtenances, as altars, sacred pillars, images, and the like. The idolatrous and impure practices of the Canaanites, to which frequent reference is made in the Torah (Exod. xxiii. 24, and elsewhere), are to the mind of the Lawgiver a constant source of danger (a "snare"; Exod. xxiii. 33, and elsewhere) to the incoming Israelites, who are to found in Palestine a new order of things befitting a "holy nation" (Exod. xix, 6, and elsewhere); hence the repeated injunctions for the complete rooting out of the idolatrous population as well as the destruction of their sanctuaries. The Lawgiver, however, is also a prophet. Although the entire Law which he is setting before the people has for its aim the safeguarding of Israel's vocation as a holy nation, free from the impurities and immoralities of the Egyptians on the one hand and of the Canaanites on the other, he anticipates the reality which will be just the reverse of the ideal contemplated by him. Israel will be seduced into the unholy practices of the Canaanite population only partially conquered by the invaders; the long road of apostasy and the inevitably ensuing divine punishment which the Lawgiver would fain spare his people, will have to be traversed, that then perchance, tried through loss of country and exile, they may address themselves to a realization of the Mosaic ideal, and become in all truth the people of the Lord, who, for all His chastisements, is mindful of the ancient covenant with the fathers. Such is the outlook in the prophetic portions of the Torah (Deut. xxviii; Lev. xxvi; Deut. iv. 25 ff.;

xxix f.). And so Israel crossed the Jordan and succumbed to the allurements of a superior civilization (Judges ii. 22; iii. 1). The impurities of the Canaanite religion crept into such a sanctuary as that of Shiloh (I Sam. ii. 22), where a Levitical priesthood ministered. Canaanite sanctuaries were taken over with all their idolatrous appurtenances (Judges ix). Even where the rites were purer, the Canaanite custom was adopted, and sanctuaries at which a Samuel and a Solomon offered their sacrifices were situated upon elevations, and were designated in Canaanite fashion as "high places," *bamot* (I Sam. ix; I Kings iii. 4). Great hopes were no doubt entertained by the leaders upon the erection of the Temple of Solomon. But those hopes were not realized. A period of acute foreign influence and religious syncretism set in, and, though some of the pious kings of Judah did away with the grosser immoralities and impurities introduced by their wicked predecessors, the *bamot* continued. The energies of Israel's leaders were directed to the eradication of the pernicious Baal cult and the other idolatrous cults. It was truly a "special dispensation" (הוראת שעה; Sifre on Deut. xii. 13), a mode of procedure warranted by the special conditions obtaining under the *régime* of Ahab, that Elijah, the great zealot-prophet, sought to restore the demolished altars of the Lord, preferring a plurality of sanctuaries devoted to the worship of the Lord of Israel to the temples of the foreign and impure Baal (I Kings xviii). The Mosaic idea of the single sanctuary, however, was resumed with vigor by the prophets of the Assyrian period. Our passage is weighty testimony to this fact. Hezekiah and, with greater thoroughness, Josiah (II Kings xvi. 3 ff.; xxiii), set about carrying the old Mosaic ideal of the single sanctuary into execution. The *bamot* were removed, and the Temple cleansed of all impurities. Their efforts, however, were neutralized by their wicked successors (ibid., 32, 37; xxiv. 9, 19). When, after the exile, the restoration came, the idea of the single sanctuary had become definitively real. Schismatics, like the Samaritans or Onias, may have disputed the claims of Jerusalem; but no one questioned the law of the single sanctuary as the very foundation of the true worship of the Lord. Moreover, the Temple of Onias was situated outside of Palestine. Similarly the Bamah (Aram. *Agor*) of Elephantine.

See on the whole subject Mishnah, Zebahim xiv. 4 ff.

## II

### On ii. 2 and vi. 9 ff.

### THE RICH AND THE POOR

Inequality in the possession of wealth is presupposed by the Lawgiver (Deut. xv. 11; contrast verse 4, which is merely the ideal conditional on the people's obedience to the Law); accordingly, the Law contains a number of provisions having for their purpose the mitigation of the evils arising from an unequal distribution of wealth, as well as exhortations addressed to the conscience of the wealthy. The sacredness of property is categorically proclaimed in the Decalogue (Exod. xx. 13); theft is a crime, whether committed by the poor or by the rich. Nor is the rich man alone prone to unlawful aggression; for hunger is a great tempter to dishonesty and theft (Prov. xxx. 9; comp. ibid., vi. 30). Nevertheless, in the ordinary course of life, crimes against property, though of a subtler kind, are perpetrated rather by the wealthy classes. The Law enjoins honesty in trade (Lev. xix. 35 f.; Deut. xxv. 13 ff.) and the scrupulous administration of justice (Exod. xxiii. 1–3; 6–8; Deut. xvi. 18–20). The removal of landmarks is made one of those great offences against which the divine curse is invoked (Deut. xxvii. 17; comp. xix. 14). The agrarian laws are intended to prevent violent changes in the tenure of land and the accumulation of large estates in the hands of the few. Thus the jubilee year is instituted (Lev. xxv. 8 ff.). The land, the Law declares, properly belongs to the Lord, who is sole landlord, the Israelites being but His tenants. The land may therefore not be sold in perpetuity. It may be leased, or its crops may be sold. For in the jubilee year the land returns to its original owner, or, to use the characteristic language of the Law, the Israelite returns to his possession and to his family, from both of which he temporarily became detached. The original owner may reclaim his property at any time he chooses by refunding to the buyer the value of the crops remaining until the jubilee. When, through poverty, he is not in a position to redeem his property himself, the right and the duty of reclaiming it devolve upon his nearest kinsman. The poor Israelite cannot be bought as a slave in perpetuity. Elsewhere, the limit of service for the Hebrew slave is fixed at seven years, after which time he goes

free (Exod. xxi. 2 ff.; Deut. xv. 12 ff.). Moreover, the care of the dependent classes is repeatedly enjoined as a duty. The rich Israelite should manifest his gratitude for the blessings he has received at the hands of Providence by inviting his poorer brethren, especially the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, to the sacrificial meals (Deut. xvi. 10 ff., 14); the third year's tithe (the poor's tithe, as the rabbis call it) belongs entirely to them (ibid. xv. 28 f.; comp. xxvi. 12 f.). The corners of the field, a forgotten sheaf, and the gleanings of the vineyard (לקט שכחה ופאה) are equally to be left for the poor (Lev. xix. 9 f.; xxiii. 22; Deut. xxiv. 19–22). The proceeds from the field which lies fallow in the sabbatic year go to the poor (Exod. xxiii. 11); nor are debts to be exacted in the year of release (Deut. xv. 1 ff.). Money may not be lent on interest to an Israelite (Exod. xxii. 24; Lev. xxv. 35 ff.; Deut. xxiii. 20); nor are pledges to be taken except on certain conditions (Exod. xx. 25 f.; Deut. xxiv. 10 ff.) The wages of a hired man must be paid the same day (Lev. xix. 13; Deut. xxiv. 14 f.).

Such are the wise and humane provisions of the Law. How far the specific laws of an agrarian character were kept, it is impossible to ascertain. That the institution of the year of release remained an ideal, we may gather from Lev. xxvi. 34, 43; according to the Talmud ('Arakin 32 *b*) the jubilee year ceased to be observed with the transportation of the trans-Jordanic tribes by the King of Assyria (referred to II Chron. v. 26). We hear of a singular case of encroachment on the part of the wicked King Ahab (I Kings xxi). In the time of Elisha, a poor widow complains of the enslavement of her two children by a cruel creditor (II Kings iv. 1). In the prophetic literature we frequently meet with complaints about the rapacity of the rich (Isa. iii. 14 f.; v. 8 ff.; Jer. v. 26 ff.; xxii. 13 ff.; Ezek. xxii. 7, 29; Amos ii. 6 ff.; iii. 9 f.; iv. 1; v. 11 f.; viii. 4 ff.; Mal. iii. 5). The rich, in order to indulge their appetites for all kinds of luxury (Amos vi. 4–6), and particularly in order to gratify the extravagant desires of their wives and daughters (ibid., iv. 1; Isa. iii. 16–23), are unscrupulous as landlords (Isa. v. 8) and merchants (Hosea xii. 8 f.), selling such commodities as grain at their own prices (Amos viii. 5), and harsh as creditors, receiving in pledge not only the poor man's belongings, but his person as well (Amos ii. 8; Jer. xxxiv. 11; comp. II Kings iv. 1). The picture of life in the higher circles of Samaria and

Jerusalem, as presented by the prophets, may perhaps be a trifle overdrawn, and there may be some exaggeration in their portrayal of the rapacity and dishonesty of the rich landlord or trader, or of the venality of justice; nor is the prophetic bent of mind capable of condoning the inequalities inherent in all civilization. But it is this very one-sidedness that made of the prophets "tribunes of the people," and their sympathy with those that are crushed in the battle of life was bequeathed to all posterity. In the Psalms, the poor are at the same time the humble and the pious, and rich is almost synonymous with tyrannical (עָרִיץ) and wicked (רָשָׁע). In the Wisdom books (among which may be reckoned the apocryphal Sirach), poverty and wealth are made the subject of many a sententious utterance. Not that poverty is pronounced a virtue, for the wise man knows how often it follows in the wake of sloth (Prov. vi. 11), nor, on the other hand, is it deemed a vice. Poverty and wealth are accepted as realities. The gulf between the rich and the poor could not be portrayed more strikingly than by Sirach in the famous saying: "What fellowship shall wolf have with lamb? Such is the wicked unto the righteous: and so is the rich unto a man that is destitute" (xiii. 17 f.). (See Schechter, "Jewish Life in the Time of Ben Sira," in *Studies in Judaism*, Second Series, 1908, 77 ff.) But no matter what the reality may be, religion demands the equality of poor and rich before God, who is the Maker of both (Prov. xxii. 2; comp. xiv. 31). Poverty is to be accepted as a discipline (Sirach ii. 5), and the hope of a better future must never be given up (ibid., 4, 6). The wealth of the rich is often ill-gotten and hastily acquired (Prov. xiii. 11; xvi. 8; xx. 21; xxviii. 22); the rich live in constant dread of losing their wealth, frightened by the phantoms which a guilty conscience conjures up (Job xv. 20 ff.); when they die, they must leave their wealth behind them, it does not descend after them (Ps. xlix. 7 ff.). A frugal meal in peace and love is to be preferred to sumptuous banquets full of strife and hatred (Prov. xv. 16 f.; xvii. 1); and a good name is better than great riches (ibid., xxii. 1).

With the Scriptural estimate of wealth goes the well-known rabbinic saying: He is rich who is content with his lot (Abot iv. 1). Wealth should be put to rightful use: he is rich who truly *enjoys* his wealth (whether great or small; Shabbat 25 *b*). Of Israel as a whole, however, it is said that poverty is most comely to it (Hagigah 9 *b*). While

strictest impartiality in the administration of justice is insisted on, charity to the poor in deed and word and personal service is made a chief virtue, and "righteousness" (צדקה) is synonymous with almsgiving. The liberality of individuals should, however, not go beyond due limits; and no man should give away more than one-fifth of his wealth (Ketubot 50 *a*). Above all, the rabbis enjoin scrupulous commercial honesty. "They who withdraw products from the market, or raise prices arbitrarily, and they who tamper with measures, and they who lend money on interest, of them it is said (Amos viii. 7): The Lord sweareth by the pride of Jacob, surely I will never forget any of their works" (Derek eres rabba ii.; Baba batra 90 *b*; Abot de-rabbi Nathan, ed. Schechter, p. 86). The punishment for falsifying measures transcends that for incest" (Baba batra 88 *b*). "Wronging one's neighbor" (comp. Lev. xxv. 14), according to the rabbis, refers not merely to monetary frauds, but also to vexing a person by word of mouth, as, for instance, when a repentant sinner is reminded of his former life, or a proselyte of his pagan antecedents, or when one sets his eye upon buying anything when he has no money; for touching all matters which are given over to the heart, Scripture says (ibid., 17), Thou shalt fear thy God (Baba mesi'a 58 *b*).

## III

### On ii. 3, 5

### THE TERMS BY WHICH ISRAEL IS DESIGNATED IN BIBLICAL AND POST-BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The subject is a vast one and requires special treatment in a monograph. It will suffice here to specify the appellations and define them as nearly as we may. In Scripture, we are designated as a *nation* (גוי, ἔθνος), or *people* (עם, לאם, λαός), or *race* (German *Stamm*, מישפחה, φυλή). The last term clearly indicates blood-relationship, which is also implied in the term *seed* (זרע, γένος). We are members of one people and race, בני עם אחד (ὁμοεθνεῖς) and בני מישפחה אחת (ὁμόφυλοι). The prevailing term in Talmudic and post-Talmudic literature is אומה, which, though synonymous with עם, is inclusive of our character as a religious body. The Talmudic term כנסת ישראל, which corresponds

to ἐκκλησία, is a solemn term denoting us chiefly on our religious side; it replaced the Biblical "congregation" (קהלה, קהל, ἐκκλησία; עדה, συναγωγή), which designates in the first place the people assembled for communal or national endeavor, war included, in other words as an organized body, but also simply the nation considered as forming a unit of cultural (religious) effort. Membership in the "congregation" implies among other privileges the right of connubium. It is every Israelite's by birth. Certain persons, however, specified in Deut. xxiii. 2 f., are excluded. With the exception of the Canaanites, who must be exterminated (ibid., vii. 2 f.), the Ammonites and Moabites, and the Egyptians and Edomites in the first two generations (ibid., xxiii. 4-9), admission to the "congregation" is apparently open to the "stranger" (גר). In a religious sense, at all events, the "stranger," after submitting to the rite of initiation, is certainly considered as a member of the "congregation", on an equal footing with the "native" (Num. xv. 15; comp., however, Kiddushin 73*b*). Thus the Torah provides for the integration of outsiders into our national and religious organism.

## IV

### On v. 1

### THE PRE-EXISTENT MESSIAH

According to a Baraita (Pesahim 54*a*; Nedarim 39*b*), the "name of the Messiah" is one of the seven things made before the creation of the world. The rabbis find Scriptural confirmation thereof in the word of the Psalmist (Ps. lxxii. 13), which in their rendering (comp. the Greek Version) reads: *Before the sun his name was established.* Similarly it is said in the Book of Enoch (xlviii. 3): "*Before the sun and the signs* (of the Zodiac) *were created, before the stars of the heaven were made, his name was named before the Lord of spirits*" (comp. Dan. vii. 13; IV Ezra xii. 32; xiii. 26, 52). The pre-existent "name" is equivalent to a transcendent figure; the Messiah, though appearing on the scene of history at a definite period, is really in existence long before his mundane career begins. (According to Klausner, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter der Tannaiten*, 1903, p. 66, the "name" indicates merely the "idea";

similarly Friedmann, in his Introduction to *Seder Elijahu*, p. 114.) Thus, no matter what may delay his coming, he must come, for he has been in the world since its beginning. The author of the Similitudes in the Book of Enoch places him in heaven with God, "under the wings of the Lord of spirits" (xxxvii. 7; in the language of the rabbis [Pesikta rabbeti, p. 161 *b*], "hidden under the throne of God"), at the head of "the righteous and elect, beautifully resplendent as lights of fire," among them "the first fathers who from the beginning dwell in that place" (lxx. 4). The Messiah is accordingly the celestial first man. The celestial first man is ultimately a mythological figure. While the sacred writers are acquainted with the old mythologies and frequently borrow poetic images from them, the Biblical books accepted by the Synagogue as canonical characteristically divest the received figures of their mythological coloring by investing them with ethical significance and frequently by combining them with historical persons in Israel or with the nation itself. It was reserved for the literature of a later day (the apocalyptic, which was kept out of the canon; the Haggadah always subordinated to the Halakah) to re-introduce the ancient mythological figures which the folk-religion had not discarded, bequeathing them to the new religion as its fundamental element. Such is the Pauline Son of God, "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation" (Colossians i. 15), the "heavenly man" (I. Corinthians xv. 48), who in the person of Jesus was sent into the world "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans viii. 3), "emptying and humbling himself, becoming obedient even unto death" (Philippians ii. 7 f.), then proving himself heavenly by conquering death, a second and worthier Adam, bringing the world not sin and death, but the deliverance therefrom, reigning until all things shall have been subjected to him, that then the Son also shall "himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all" (I Corinthians xv). In the sequel, the pre-existent celestial Man of Oriental mythology became the pre-existent and eternal Word, the Logos, or Reason, of Neo-Platonism, which "was in the beginning with God, and became flesh in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son" (John i). Our Book of Prayer, on lines truly Scriptural, emphasizes the national character of the Messiah, though

the ethico-religious implications are not forgotten; nay, the person of the Messiah is more or less kept in the background, and the heart of the Jew, as he prays for national restoration, the gathering of the dispersed, and the rebuilding of Zion, centres in the advent of the Kingdom of God for a humanity integrated into Israel, banded together to do God's will with a perfect heart, with Zion as the spiritual centre of the world (see Singer's Prayer Book, p. 239).

## V

### On v. 4

### THE COMPANIONS OF THE MESSIAH

The Talmud (Sukkah 52*b*) specifies the seven shepherds as Adam, Seth, and Methuselah (another reading: Seth, Enoch, and Methuselah) on the right, and Abraham, Jacob, and Moses on the left, with David in the centre; and the eight princes as Jesse, Saul, Samuel, Amos, Zephaniah, Zedekiah (another reading: Hezekiah), Elijah, and the Messiah. (Num. rabba, ch. xiv, records a difference of opinion concerning the number of "anointed persons," משוחים, χριστοί, as Symmachus has it here; according to some, it amounts to seven, while others bring it up to eight. See also Pesikta rabbeti, p. 75*a*.) Rashi confesses his ignorance of the source of this Haggadic list of names or the principle of selection. Perhaps more than one principle underlies it. The Messiah requires no explanation. David is frequently spoken of as the future ruler (Hosea iii. 5, and elsewhere); moreover, he bears the Messianic title ("the Lord's Anointed," II Sam. xix. 22, and elsewhere). The same title is given to Saul (I Sam. xxiv. 7); also in Lam. iv. 20 to one of the last kings of Judah, whom some (Ibn Ezra) identify with Zedekiah, while others (Targum) think of Josiah. Enoch and Elijah were translated to heaven (Gen. v. 24; II Kings ii. 11), entering paradise while alive (Derek eres zutta i. 14), without having tasted death (Gen. rabba, ch. xxi); and Moses died by the kiss of the Lord (Deut. rabba, ch. xi). Similarly it is said of Jacob that he did not suffer death (Ta'anit 5*b*). Of Abraham we read (Testament of Abraham xvi f.) that (the angel of) death presented himself to him in beautiful form and with a crown upon his head, and the "bosom of

Abraham" is the place to which the righteous are carried upon their death (Kiddushin 72 *b*; comp. Luke xvi. 22). Adam, Seth, and Methuselah represent the righteous patriarchs of the antediluvian period. Jesse is the father of David; moreover, the rabbis tell of him that he was sinless at the time of his death, thus meriting the latter only in consequence of the universal fall of man (Shabbat 55 *b*). Samuel is the prophet who anointed David (I Sam. xvi). I can find no reason why Amos and Zephaniah should be singled out from among all the "literary" prophets. Hezekiah is a would-be Messiah (Sanhedrin 94 *a*; comp. Berakot 28 *b*). Elijah is frequently mentioned as the forerunner of the Messiah (see Friedmann's Introduction to his Edition of *Seder Elijahu*, p. 8 ff.); according to Deut. rabba, ch. iii, and the Fragmentary Targum, Exod. xii. 42, he will be accompanied by Moses. In the story of the transfiguration (Mark ix. 2 ff.), Jesus is surrounded by Moses and Elijah, the companions of the Messiah. In all probability, back of the "seven" "anointed persons" (or "eight," if the Messiah himself be counted) are mythological conceptions concerning the seven planets or archangels (see Zimmern, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, 1903, p. 620 ff.), another example of mythological matter which has been nationalized, i. e. combined with the hopes of the nation.

## VI

### On vi. 6 ff.

### THE PROPHETIC ESTIMATES OF THE SACRIFICIAL CULT

Prophetic estimates of the sacrificial cult and of ritualism as an inferior mode of worship occur in Amos v. 21 ff.; Hosea vi. 6, comp. viii. 13; Isa. i. 11 ff.; Jer. vii. 21 ff.; comp. I Sam. xv. 22; Isa. lviii. 5 ff.; Zech. vii. 5 ff.; viii. 16 ff. Indifference to the sacrificial cult is met with in the Psalms (xl. 7 ff.; li. 18 f.), and in the Haggadic utterances of the rabbis. To quote but one: "They asked Wisdom, What is the consequence of sin? It answered, Evil pursueth sinners (Prov. xiii. 21). Prophecy answered: The soul that sinneth, it shall die (Ezek. xviii. 4). The Torah answered: Let him bring a guilt-offering and it shall be forgiven him. God answered: Let him repent

and it shall be forgiven him, for thus it is written: 'Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way (of repentance)' (Ps. xxv. 8)" (Palestinian Talmud, Makkot 31 *d*). As a summary of man's duty to God, Micah vi. 8 is certainly classic; as such it is recognized by the Haggadist Simlai, according to whom, however, "Keep justice, and do righteousness" (Isa. lvi. 1) and "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. ii. 4) are still shorter compendia (Makkot 24 *a*). Neither Simlai, however, nor any of the prophets desired the abrogation of the Torah. And the Torah itself contains just such compendious summaries which, with fine literary insight, Steinthal (*Zur Bibel*, II [1895], p. 145 f.) pronounces much superior in diction and tone. The prophet is too much the ecstatic mouthpiece of the Deity, too much carried away by the impulse of the moment, to be truly artistic. The Deuteronomic orator is quite different: "he is general; he has no specific period in view, but all periods; he speaks for eternity". And so he addresses Israel: "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I am commanding thee this day for thy good?" (Deut. x. 12).

According to Maimuni (*Guide of the Perplexed*, III, ch. xxii), the sacrificial cult was ordained by Moses as an accommodation to the unspiritual conceptions of the people and for the purpose of weaning them away from the idolatrous rites of their neighbors. By a circuitous road, the people were thus to be led slowly and gradually up to a perception of the right kind of service, which is spiritual. Although attacked by Nahmani (Commentary on Lev. i. 9), Maimuni's explanation is defended by Abrabanel (Introduction to his Commentary on Leviticus), who finds support for that view in a significant passage in the Midrash (Lev. rabba, ch. xxii). "Rabbi Phinehas in the name of Rabbi Levi said," we read there, "It is like a prince whose appetite was gross, and he was wont to eat of the meat of animals that had died of themselves, or that had been torn by beasts. So the king said, Let him eat constantly at my table, and he will wean himself from that habit. So it was with the Israelites who were engrossed in Egyptian idolatry, and were wont to offer their sacrifices on the high places to the demons, and punishments used to

come upon them; so the Holy One, blessed be He, said, Let them offer their sacrifices before Me at all times, in the Tabernacle, and they will be weaned from idolatry, and thus be saved." It goes without saying that, notwithstanding such views, the rabbis did not cease to look forward to a restoration of the sacrificial cult in the Messianic times.

## VII

### On vi. 7

### HUMAN SACRIFICES

The custom of child sacrifice in antiquity is met with in many parts of the world; but nowhere among civilized nations was it as established a part of the public religion as among the Phœnicians, and especially the Carthaginians. The author of the Book of Kings reports that Ahaz "offered his son by fire" (II Kings xvi. 3); similarly of Manasseh (ibid., xxi. 6). Jeremiah and Ezekiel allude to the practice in their days (Jer. vii. 31; xix. 5 ff.; xxxii. 35; comp. iii. 24; Ezek. xvi. 20 f., 36; xx. 26, 31; xxiii. 37, 39). According to the testimony of the former, the scene of the child sacrifices was the Tophet in the valley of Ben Hinnom outside of Jerusalem, not far from the Temple. The children were slain and then offered as burnt-offerings (Ezek. xvi. 20 f., 36; xxiii. 39; Jer. xix. 5; see Nahmani on Lev. xviii. 21). It is also clear from several of the Biblical references that the sacrifices were offered to the Lord under the aspect of King *Melek* = *Molek*; the latter is a conscious mispronunciation for the purpose of suggesting *Bosheṭ*, "Shame"), although the practice was introduced in Israel from abroad. Jeremiah (vii. 31, and elsewhere) vehemently protests against the idea that such sacrifices were ordered by the Lord; and Ezekiel (xx. 20 f.) declares that, inasmuch as the people disobeyed the Lord's commandments "by which, if a man do them, he will live" (the phrase is borrowed from Lev. xviii. 5), He implanted in them the pernicious idea that He desired such sacrifices, thus defiling them by their very gifts to the Lord and preparing their destruction (so, correctly, the Targum). (On Lev. xxvii. 29, see Dillmann's Commentary.) In the form of a story, Gen. xxii conveys the lesson that, although the motive which prompts the sacrifice of one's dearest child has a religious

basis in obedience to the Lord, such sacrifices are not desired by Him. While, however, the *dénouement* of that didactic story is not quite satisfactory with its accommodation to the popular need of tangible devotion by means of animal sacrifices (a "ram" is substituted for the child; Cheyne, article *Isaac* in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, aptly compares it with the accommodation to popular standards in the epilogue of the Book of Job), our passage rises to a higher view by proclaiming that even "rams" are not demanded by the Lord. Child sacrifices are mentioned in the Bible in two other places (the son of Mesha, II Kings iii. 27, the vow of Jephthah, Judges xi.) The rabbis, in commenting on Jer. xix. 5, maintain that neither the sacrifice of the son of Mesha, nor that of the daughter of Jephthah, nor that of Isaac, was commanded by the Lord (Ta'anit 4 *a*).

## VIII

### On vii. 15

### THE PASSOVER WHICH IS TO COME

The future, Messianic, redemption is frequently likened to the first, and the latter exodus from the exile to the former exodus from Egypt (comp. Isa. xi. 15 f. [ch. xii corresponds to Exod. xv]; Jer. xxiii. 7 f.). The rabbis frequently liken the last redeemer (the Messiah) to the first (Moses) (Pesikta rabbeti, p. 72 b; Cant. rabba on Cant. ii. 9, and parallel passages), and place the latter redemption in Nisan, the month of the former redemption (Exod. rabba, ch. xv). In our Book of Prayer, no less than in the Midrashic literature, the emotions of Israel oscillate between the memory of the glorious beginning of our national life and the hope in the still more glorious future. Hence, after the recital of the marvellous redemption from Egypt, the prayer: "O Rock of Israel, arise as Helper of Israel, and redeem according to Thy word Judah and Israel; Thy name of old is our redeemer, Lord of hosts, Holy One of Israel. Blessed be Thou, O Redeemer of Israel" (Singer's Prayer Book, p. 44). According to the Mekilta (on Exod. xv. 1), the "new song" (Isa. xlii. 10) is the song of final triumph in the Passover which is to come, corresponding to the song of Moses at the Passover of Egypt.

Hence the prayer in the Passover Haggadah (antedating the Mishnah, Pesahim x. 6; comp. Mahzor Vitry, p. 296): "Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the world, who hast redeemed us and our fathers from Egypt, and hast caused us to reach this night, to eat thereon unleavened bread and bitter herbs; so mayest Thou, O Lord our God, cause us to reach other seasons and festivals which are before us in peace, rejoicing in the rebuilding of Thy city and glad of Thy service, that we may eat there of the paschal sacrifice and of the other offerings, when the blood thereof will touch the wall of Thine altar, that we may be accepted before Thee; and that we may then praise Thee, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, with a new song for our redemption and the deliverance of our souls. Blessed be Thou, O Lord, Redeemer of Israel." The paitanic insertions in the Evening Prayer of the last day of Passover (Mahzor Vitry, p. 573 f.) are built on the motive that the Passover of Egypt (פסח מצרים) will be paralleled by the Passover which is to come (פסח לעתיד). Against Ben Zoma, who, on the basis of Jer. xxiii. 7 f., maintains that the Egyptian exodus will be so far transcended by the latter that the former will no longer be mentioned, the doctors in the Mishnah are of the opinion that the former exodus will still be a secondary theme when the latter will be the main subject of Israel's praises (Berakot i. 5; Talmud, 12 *b* f.). Thus the historic continuity of Israel is assured even for the glorious time of the final restoration.

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